MINISTRY LEADERSHIP IN A NEW CHURCH SETTING:

A PERSONAL VOICE

A Professional Project

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Ministry

by

Karen Schubert Dalton

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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Abstract

Ministry Leadership in a New Church Setting:

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The goal of this project is to develop a conceptual and
practical understanding of ministry leadership as related
particularly to starting a new church. The distinctive
features of the new church context, including the lack of
external support and validation for leadership, are kept in
view. Of particular concern are the leadership tasks of
clergy, and especially the concerns of a clergywoman as one
not traditionally perceived as a ministry leader.

The method used is a dialogical approach between case
study experience of the writer and research of available
literature. Literature used includes theological writing,
with special attention to the work of feminist theologians,
and resources from the social science approaches to
leadership. Case study material is derived from the first
two and a half years of a new congregation in Southern
California. Critical incidents are included as well as
description of the congregation's development and
characteristics.

Chapter 1 includes identification of leadership needs
and issues in starting a new church, based particularly on
observation of this setting. In Chapter 2 alternate ways of
picturing leadership relations are described and illustrated.

In Chapter 3 a theological understanding of ministry leadership is developed, beginning with discussion of leadership, power, and authority, exploring related themes in theology of ministry, and integrating them theologically. In Chapter 4 four leadership issues are explored, with reference to social science literature. The issues are: development of vision, shaping of culture, empowerment, and the person of the leader. Chapter 5 is a presention of case study description and reflection on the first three issues. Chapter 6 begins with case study observations on the topic of the person of the leader, and concludes with reflections on the theological and practical framework developed earlier in the project.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my great appreciation and thanks to the many teachers who influenced this project. The people of Christ by the Mountains United Methodist Church, a portion of whose story is told in the following pages, have enriched my life and my understanding. Thanks also to my advisors Dr. Kathy Black and Dr. Marjorie Suchocki, and to my longtime advisor and all-purpose resource person, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Moore.

To my husband Bob and my daughters Amy and Ellen goes my love and appreciation always, and especially for their patience and encouragement to me as ministry leader and student.

Table of Contents

iv

vi

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

<u>Why This Project?</u>

Two years ago I began a new assignment, as founding
pastor of a new United Methodist congregation. The
congregation did not exist yet; it was my job to get the new
church started.

As I began the task of figuring out what I ought to do
in this highly open-ended situation, I began to ask myself
questions. First were the questions of role and even of
identity: Who am I in this context? What are the most
important job description components for a minister founding
a new congregation? How should I understand my identity and
overall role responsibilities? Questions of the second type
were more specific and had to do with practice: In this
context and at this time, what ought to be my goals and
priorities for action? How will these goals and priorities
be reflected and embodied in what I actually do?

I began to realize that the pastor's role in a start-up
church setting is primarily a leadership role. Clearly I
could not be a maintainer, since there was nothing yet to
maintain. Neither could I define myself primarily as
producer or do-er, since there was way more to produce and do
than I or any other one person could possibly accomplish.
Besides, I knew at least in theory that church is not an
independent achievement situation, or a contract for one

person to be the super-worker. The key had to be leadership.
I needed to learn to engage, energize, and coordinate the
work of others as well as myself, so that together we would
develop the church.

The more I thought about that word leadership the more
poorly prepared I felt, both in terms of my self-
understanding and also in terms of knowledge and skills for
practice. Seminary training had not emphasized the
leadership functions of the minister other than those related
to worship; indeed I began to wonder if there was built-in
tension between the notions of minister and of leader.
As Letty Russell puts it,

> Leadership is not the idea behind ministry. [The
> word minister] specifically is a reference to one
> who is a servant and who renders humble service to
> others, in service at the table, with footwashing
> and all the rest. (Mark 1:29-31; Acts 6:1-6)[1]

In addition, the new church setting carries special
characteristics and challenges for leadership. Most dramatic
and obvious is the fact that many of the usual supports for
leadership and authority are lacking. In the very beginning,
the church exists only as an idea, a vision for the future.
There is no building; there is no existing human network with
a shared history or present identity. This compounds the
absence of external support and validation facing today's

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[1] Letty M. Russell, Church in the Round: Feminist
Interpretation of the Church (Louisville: Westminster/John
Knox Press, 1993), 54.

church generally. In our unchurched culture people do not automatically recognize or validate the importance of church and minister. "Why should we listen to you or follow you?" the culture asks. Compounding this are the challenges to leadership and authority frequently faced by women or others not traditionally perceived as leaders.

The pastor in a new church, whether female or male, works in a highly demanding situation. There is an enormous amount of work to do, and at the beginning there are few or no other people to share the load. However, the demand goes beyond a straightforward issue of work overload. As a colleague expressed it to me recently, "People are counting on you in a whole different way than they are in a more institutionalized church." Especially at first, the new work belongs to the leader in a way unparalleled in an established church. This is especially so if the pastor begins without a core group of lay leaders already present and committed. Pastor and church are identified with each other almost to the point of merger. Such weight on one person can be seductive and also can be a set-up for messiah complexes and burnout.

In the midst of my ministry work and with these observations in mind, I began to look for resources. I started to read widely, everything I could find on the topic of leadership. It did not take long to figure out that there is a scarcity of resources which speak explicitly to the

leadership issues of the new church start context.

Within literature related to the arts of ministry generally, I found surprisingly little that directly addresses leadership. Books and articles on new congregation development emphasize technique and management. A "cookbook" approach is common; for example informing the reader of the exact number of telemarketing-type phone calls which will automatically yield the desired number of worshipers at a first service. Information is abundant on topics such as demographics and advertising but the resources are scarce when it comes to the more foundational questions of leadership which seemed to me more significant than did the issues of technique. In the broader field of arts of ministry literature, if leadership is discussed at all the minister-as-leader usually appears to the mainline people as a non-directive facilitator. By the more conservative writers he (and the minister is usually assumed to be a he) is pictured as a charismatic and probably authoritarian figure.

Resources addressing leadership in terms of women's experiences and contributions are also scarce, perhaps because many in the culture still consider the term women's leadership an oxymoron. The scarcity of resources is evident even or perhaps especially if explicitly feminist sources are sought. For example, in a search of the Claremont Colleges' library system, I found no books with the words "feminist"

and "leadership" both occurring in the same title. Looking under "women" and "leadership" yielded a mere handful of titles.

On the other hand, there is an extensive body of literature on leadership, written from the perspective of social and behavioral sciences. The whole topic of leadership is a current preoccupation in these fields, if the number of books and seminars with "leadership" in their titles is any indicator. Some writers address the distinctive features of leadership in volunteer organizations, a topic with obvious relevance to ministry. There is also some recognition of the styles and contributions of women who are entering leadership positions in ever-increasing numbers.

I was familiar with some of this literature from my pre-seminary days as a teacher and consultant in the field of communication and organization development. Since entering the ministry I have wanted to return to my old territory for the purpose of reflecting theologically and integrating this knowledge and skill with my understanding of ministry. Since many clergy and others in church leadership are unfamiliar with these resources and approaches, I also hope to share my reflections and thus contribute to the understanding and practice of leadership in the church.

My goals for the project are practically-oriented: I hope to develop my own understanding and practice of

leadership and to offer resources to others seeking to do the same. I particularly hope that my experiences and reflections will prove fruitful for other pastors of new congregations and for other clergywomen. I suspect also that two other groups of people might share some of my concerns: people whose task it is to develop new ministry or new program of any kind; and categories of people, in addition to women, who are not traditionally expected to be leaders. My conclusions may be different, but perhaps my process of thinking through context, personal identity, and direction will contribute to similar reflection on the part of others with whom I share common ground.

Overview of Method and Content

All the thought described above was going on in the midst of navigating my way through the early months of the new church's life. As more time passed I continued to reflect on my experience and bring it into dialogue with a study of leadership literature. The outgrowth of that reflection and dialogue is this project. My goal is to work toward both a theological understanding and practice of ministry leadership, relating to my concerns as a clergywoman pastoring a new church. My first concern and strongest motivation relates to my own identity and practice as a ministry leader: I want to increase my effectiveness in this ministry context. In addition, I hope to share reflections and resources with others, particularly other women in church

leadership. While I am speaking both from and to the life situation of a new church pastor, it is my hope that people in other situations also may discover some aspect of themselves, their lives, and their concerns in the pages which follow.

The method I have chosen for this project is a practice-oriented method which finds its sources in feminist and other liberation theologies. Following a principle of feminist theology, I am claiming my own experience as valid and relevant data. Following the lead of Latin American liberation theologians, I am using an action-reflection method. The questions being asked and the issues raised are specifically those arising out of my experience. My search for resources has been guided by that experience and those questions. The method is more like a spiral than a straight line, moving again and again through cycles of action and observation, followed by reading and reflection, which then informs further action and leads to additional research and reflection. If the reader suspects that she or he has been dropped someplace in the middle of this spiral rather than at the beginning, be assured that this suspicion is accurate.

While I consider my personal experience and context central, I do not consider them idiosyncratic. In doing research I have assumed that other people and other situations have both resonance with my own and wisdom to offer me. In working with the literature on leadership, I

have drawn heavily from sources based on interviews and case studies, letting the specifics as well as the generalizations of these resources speak to the specific and general concerns of ministry in my context. I also assume that others are asking the questions I am asking, and that the resources which are valuable to me will have value to others as well.

Chapter 2 begins with definitions and word-pictures of leadership. More than that, in this chapter I have literally drawn out these word-pictures and explored their implications. We have all heard that a picture is worth a thousand words; so too with the pictures in our heads. An abstract topic such as leadership can be brought to life through the images we use to understand it.

In Chapter 3 the discussion moves to a more theoretically oriented reflection on the issues of role and identity posed by the context of ministry in a new church. First is a return to definitions, with the purpose of exploring more fully the meanings our culture assigns to the words ministry, leadership, power, and authority. A survey of recent themes in theology of ministry and in leadership theory will be offered, because all these cultural meanings influence the practice of ministry. They shape our professional preparation and identity, the ways we think of ourselves, and what we do. They also influence the expectations and judgments placed on us by others. This section highlights the dilemmas and resources of women in

contemporary leadership, as these are suggested in the literature. The chapter's conclusion is a first-round articulation of a theology of ministry leadership.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of the leadership issues or tasks, emphasized in the literature, which I consider the most important leadership agendas in a new church start. Literature on leadership is surveyed with these four tasks in view, seeking guidelines for practice. Theoretical constructs and methods are described, as they are relevant to the new church setting and offer guidelines for leadership practice.

Chapter 5 is a case study presentation of my attempts to apply the practical guidelines set forth in Chapter 4. The goal is to test and critique the theoretical material through the wisdom gained from experience.

In Chapter 6 I return to theological reflection, seeking ways to integrate the more practice-oriented aspects explored in Chapters 4 and 5 into a theology of ministry leadership.

Observations and Assumptions

The new church setting is dynamic, always changing. Indeed the success of the new venture depends on the congregation's growth and also on its ability to adapt to the changing circumstances presented by that growth. Pastoring a new church is sometimes like parenting a young child: as soon as you figure out how to respond to a particular developmental stage, the small person has moved on to a new

stage and the parent must figure that one out! A theory and practice of leadership appropriate for such a context must view leadership dynamically. The new church as a whole organization is dynamic, always moving on to what is not yet fully realized. The leader's behavior must also be dynamic: there must be an ability to respond in new ways as situations change.

The leadership agenda in a new church is particularly centered around building up community. Community is always basic to church--without community there is no Body of Christ, no church. In the very beginning, community does not yet exist. Calling the community into being does not happen just by getting people in the door. Consensus must develop about the vision, mission, or goals of the congregation and also about its character or personality. Developing the community also involves building up the strength of its members, together and separately, to actualize its vision.

I believe that these two characteristics of a new congregation--its dynamic quality and the central place of community-building--must be addressed in any leadership theory and practice adequate to the context. A third characteristic which must be taken into account the fact that the setting features a lack of external supports for leadership and authority, as described on page 2 and 3. These challenges to leadership are compounded when the minister is a woman.

In my denomination, United Methodist, women have been ordained into full connection since 1956 but acceptance of women clergy is still new enough to be often shaky and shallow. Like most other clergywomen, I can tell my share of sometimes humorous and sometimes painful stories about people's reactions to the idea that the minister is a woman. Such stories tell us that parish ministry is often a difficult setting for clergywomen. In the United Methodist Church many ordained women who start in congregational ministry leave it fairly soon, either leaving the ministry altogether or taking positions outside the local church.

The implications of this are important to recognize. One is that the right of women to lead is still at issue in the church and we who are women in church leadership cannot avoid dealing with that fact. We are almost certain to face challenges to our authority and denial of our right to be doing what we are doing. More difficult yet is the fact that the disconfirming messages we receive have a way of sneaking into our own sense of self, sometimes leading us to question and undercut our own authority, competence, and call to ministry. As I have struggled with these dynamics I have become convinced that we must think through and understand our own power and authority in order to live out our ministry freely, with confidence and without apology.

In addition to the three observations stated above, two deeply-held assumptions shape what I do and how I think about

ministry and leadership. The first is the feminist

insistence that all of life is relational and specifically

that ministry has to do with relationship. As human beings

we are who we are, and we become who we become, in the

context of our relationships. We live in an interwoven

fabric of human relations which shape us and through which we

contribute to shaping our world.

To take this farther, relationships include both our

connection to others and our differentiation from them.

Developmental psychologists remind us that human maturity

involves both intimacy and autonomy, separation and

connection.[2] The notion of relationship includes issues of

connectedness and also of boundaries: healthy relationship

does not mean the stuck-togetherness or loss of boundaries

described in popular literature by the term co-dependence.

A second basic assumption is that our capacity to

minister effectively--indeed to live fully--has everything to

do with our wholeness and genuineness as people. The word

for this is integrity. A technical word from the field of

communication is congruence: with a congruent person

everything fits together. Words, actions, and body all send

the same message. The word congruence describes the outside,

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[2] See Carol Gilligan, _In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development_ (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); and Robert Kegan, _The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development_ (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

observable features of a person. Such wholeness on the outside is possible only when there is wholeness on the inside--when a person is growing in spiritual integration.

Speaking theologically, our lack of integrity is a manifestation of sin. We are broken; we lack that wholeness which is the root meaning of integrity. We experience alienation from ourselves and thus from the Spirit present in us. Yet the possibility of growth towards wholeness, genuineness, and congruence comes from the work of the Holy Spirit within us. This has implications for ministry and leadership, suggesting that personal spirituality is central and that technique is significant only as embodied in a real person.

This project is not intended as a how-to manual of techniques. Such resources are readily available, and the books and periodicals which take this approach have been very helpful to me. However, they have not provided the kind of overview or map I have sought to guide the way. In addition to technique, a new church pastor needs a thorough understanding of both identity and general goals. Out of such an understanding, plus an accurate perception of context, appropriate technique can be discovered. It is at this level of observation and reflection that I have chosen to work.

With these observations and assumptions in mind, let us turn now to definitions and images of leadership.

CHAPTER 2

Leadership: Definitions and Images

A working definition of leadership is this: leadership is the process of influencing the perceptions, motivation, goals, and/or actions of other people, for the purpose of moving toward a goal. Four parts of this definition should be elaborated. First, leadership has to do with interpersonal relationships. It makes no sense to speak of leading oneself; a person leads others in a context of human relationships. Secondly, leadership involves the process of influence in human relationships, and thus involves issues of power and authority. However, exerting leadership is nuanced differently than exerting power or exerting authority; there is a stronger connotation that the leader influences others to act voluntarily or at least willingly. If this is so, then leadership has more to do with shaping perception and motivation than do the processes which come to mind with the words power and authority. A third and closely related point is that leadership is in a sense dependent on the followers' recognition and acceptance. There is no leadership unless people choose to follow. To quote Letty Russell again, "leadership is the ability to evoke a following."[1] Fourth, leadership is goal-oriented, for the purpose of getting somewhere.

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[1] Russell, Church in the Round, 52.

As a way of making the abstract concept of leadership more concrete, it is helpful to consider the word-pictures commonly used to describe leadership relations and structures. Most often, leader-follower relationships are pictured either in triangular shape or as circles. These two basic shapes, and the various ways they are elaborated and described, illustrate different understandings of power and authority, communication, and the closeness-distance dimension of leader-follower relations.

Probably the most entrenched picture of leader-follower relationships is the pyramid structure, brought to the modern mind by the sociologist Max Weber.[2] To develop his theory of bureaucracy, Weber looked at the military structure used from the time of Julius Caesar. Weber's pyramid still shows up in countless organizational charts and in organizations which assume a top-down, hierarchical structure. Human relations are pictured like this:[3]
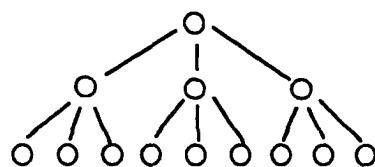
The organizational pyramid and its assumptions of one-

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[2] Described in R. Wayne Pace, _Organizational Communication: Foundations for Human Resource Development_ (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1983), 11-18.

[3] This chart and all others in the chapter are my own constructions, visual representations of abstract ideas.

up, one-down relationships, can be critiqued in terms of power and hierarchy: such a structure tends to set up static power relationships, concentrates power at the top, and limits communication between the levels in the pyramid. Bearing in mind the observations about new church ministry, two additional shortcomings of this model stand out. First of all, the pyramid as a whole is static. The human pyramid calls to mind one of the most static structures imaginable-- the pyramids of Egypt have been in the same place for thousands of years. We can hardly picture the whole pyramid going anywhere, or its internal structure changing very much. A second feature is that the pyramid works against relationships by limiting the channels of communication available at any point within it. The one at the top of the pyramid is the most isolated; thus this structure works against development of relationships between leader and others.

In recent years some have suggested that we ought to picture the organizational pyramid turned upside down. This inverted pyramid would embody the conviction that the real job of those in leadership and authority is to support and serve the people at the bottom of the pyramid, who are the ones doing the production or service-delivery work of the organization. The leader, pictured at the bottom, functions as both resource person and cheerleader. The organizational picture would look like this:
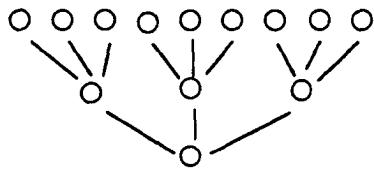
No longer do these relationships look static, but no longer either does the structure look stable. We would probably not envy the person at the bottom of the pyramid, who is still isolated but now, in the picture, carrying the whole organization.

Another contemporary image of leadership is the flying wedge of Canada geese. The leader is the goose at the point of the V, the one who sets the direction for the whole flock. The lead goose influences others not only by showing them the way but literally by making their flight easier by cutting through wind resistance and setting up air currents which help those who are flying behind. Presumably the geese are choosing to follow. Every once in a while a wedge of geese will break up and the geese fly every which way, perhaps in their own way making a temporary choice not to follow. Leadership in the flock is rotating rather than fixed; when the lead goose tires it drops back and another bird takes up the front position. The flock has a goal: to get to the proper spot, north or south depending on the season. The goal belongs to the whole group; achieving it is a benefit (really a necessity) to all. The picture looks like this:
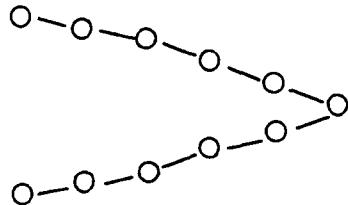
Now the triangle is turned on its side in a dynamic structure which is organized for the purpose of moving somewhere. Leadership is a matter of function and temporary position, not a rigid hierarchy. However, the lead goose is still isolated. Those in the back might see a danger, a goal, or a route, but the goose out front would be too far away to hear their communication. Even for those along the line, communication would be limited to near neighbors. The wedge as a whole is organized for the accomplishment of a task and not the nurture of relationships or the development of community. No doubt the geese are glad when they stop for the night. Similarly, humans cannot keep flying along always on task without stopping to rest and nurture relationships.

The pyramid, the inverted pyramid, the wedge: all are triangles. When women write about leadership we often see a different shape: the circle.

In her most recent book, Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church, Letty Russell offers the round table as the most fitting metaphor for relational ecology in the church. Specifically, she speaks of the kitchen table, the place for gathering, experiencing hospitality, and

sharing in dialogue.[4] Leadership at the round table is for

the purpose of developing community. A leader has a place at

the table, just as others do, and "authority is exercised by

standing with others by seeking to share power and authority.

Power is seen as something to be multiplied and shared rather

than accumulated at the top."[5] The picture looks like this:
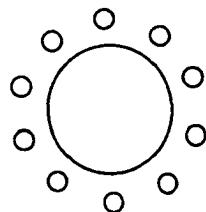
In some ways this model is the opposite of the wedge of

geese--people at the table look inward, at each other rather

than facing in the same direction toward an outward goal.

Its strength is in the nurture and maintenance of persons and

of relationships, which after all is the function of the

kitchen table. The opposite side of this strength is that

the kitchen table image fails to convey any missional nature

to the church beyond its own maintenance. The model is

highly egalitarian in that there is little differentiation

between leaders and others. The leader does not stand or sit

apart at all; leadership is not "out front" but in the same

position as everyone else. The kitchen table also brings to

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[4] Russell, Church in the Round, 17.

[5] Russell, Church in the Round, 57.

mind a fairly static organization. Like the pyramid, the table is designed to stay in place and to maintain its size and shape even though people may come and go or switch places. Communication flow is better than in a triangle, but as anyone who has sat at a round table knows, conversation across the table is often limited by noise and distance barriers.

Another and different circle picture of leadership comes from Frances Hesselbein, now-retired national executive director of Girl Scouts U.S.A. Hesselbein consciously organizes leadership relations in the pattern of a wheel. She locates the leader in the middle of the wheel, at the hub. Management teams are placed in an expanding series of concentric circles, connected to the center and to each other in a web-like pattern of communication lines. The Girl Scouts' wheel literally turns, as management jobs are rotated every few years. The circle, says Hesselbein, is inclusive and at the same time allows for flow and movement. It does not box you in. To use another of her metaphors, we can say that the leader is at the heart rather than the head, reaching out rather than down. She is located in the center of communication rather than being isolated at edge or top. Her goal is to build up connections within the organization.[6] The picture looks like this:

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[6] Sally Helgesen, The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership (New York: Doubleday Currency, 1990), 40-50.
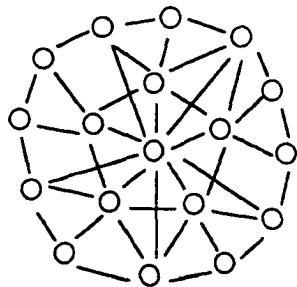
This picture puts the leader at the center of community and conversely at the point which is most isolated from the surrounding environment. The leader as heart is ideally located for the goal of building up connections within the structure, but less well located if we think of the whole wheel needing to move. At the hub of the wheel, maximum energy is needed to start everything going. The energy force must be more of a push than a pull. Perhaps in this structure the connection to surroundings and the impetus for moving in response to external factors must come from those closer to the edge of the wheel.

Of these five leadership images, the three that seem to speak most fully to a new church context are Russell's round table, Hesselbein's wheel and the wedge of geese. The wheel and the round table both fit with a relational understanding of leadership and the new church priority of community-building. The two circle images are especially attractive to those who, like myself, prefer to be in the middle of things, standing with people. Yet I suspect that the leader of a new venture, like that goose at the front of the wedge, must

sometimes be out ahead of others, pulling them along toward realization of a shared vision.

Let us keep these three images in mind as we continue, imagining a leadership style with enough flexibility to move between the different relational configurations.

CHAPTER 3

Toward a Theology of Ministry Leadership

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to give a first-round description of the conceptual territory implied by the word leadership and then to move on to theological reflection. The discussion will be carried out at a more theoretical level than in the rest of the project.

The starting point is an elaboration of definitions: definitions of leadership and the related concepts of power and authority, followed by a very general exploration of the words minister and pastor. In a sense the definition section is a non-biblical word study, looking at the meanings our culture attaches to these abstract and important words. There is no attempt to make an exhaustive study but rather to look at selected major themes, especially recent themes in the study of leadership and in theology of ministry. Such extended definitions are important because the meanings we make for words like leadership, power, authority, minister, and pastor influence our self-understanding and ways of acting in our own life contexts. In addition, the meanings others make and then project on us in the form of expectations affect us as well. Therefore clarity about such terms is necessary at the outset.

Next, the definitions are contextualized and examined in relationship to the present societal context. Of particular

concern is the experience of women and the way selected feminist writers articulate the experience of women.

The chapter's conclusion is a first-round articulation of theological understandings for leadership in ministry. I have drawn upon a variety of biblical and other resources with strong emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in ministry leadership. Because the discussion is primarily a conceptual one, it is incomplete without further testing and dialogue with experience. Thus the same theological territory is revisited in Chapter 6, after case study description and reflection.

Definitions: Leadership, Power, and Authority

Leadership

The initial definition of leadership, offered in Chapter 2, is this: leadership is the process of influencing the perceptions, motivation, goals, and/or actions of other people, for the purpose of moving toward a goal. Four elements of the definition are highlighted: its relational character, the fact that leadership has to do with influence and thus with power and authority, that leadership depends on followers' recognition and acceptance, and that leadership is goal-oriented.

There is debate among people who write definitions of leadership about whose goals are being advanced by the leader's efforts. The words of Vance Packard represent one side of the debate: "In essence leadership seems to be the

art of getting others to want to do something you are convinced should be done."[1] James MacGregor Burns, author of the influential book Leadership, disagrees. In his view the essence of leadership is to "arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers." Burns thinks that in order for leadership to take place, goals must be mutually held by leaders and followers.[2] An important function of leadership is to identify and articulate shared goals, even those which might initially be hidden or only partially understood.

Burns is concerned with issues of morality in leadership. He offers three criteria for moral leadership: (1) leaders and followers have a relationship of mutual needs, aspirations, and values, (2) followers are choosing to follow, and (3) leaders take responsibility for their commitments.[3] Burns' view of leadership emphasizes the connections between leaders and followers as well as the responsibility and decision-making capacity of all involved. He also views leadership as happening in a context of conflict, because there are always other motives and

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[1] Quoted in James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 26.

[2] James MacGregor Burns, Leadership (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1978), 18.

[3] Burns, 18.

directions competing with those of the leadership process.[4]

Contemporary literature on leadership emphasizes how it differs from management. Leadership has to do with direction, vision, and judgment--determining what is to be done. Management has more to do with implementing the routines and perhaps determining how things are to be done. If the word for good leadership is effective, the corresponding word for management might be efficient.

Later in the chapter we will return to a discussion of leadership, dealing particularly with themes in contemporary leadership literature. At this point it is important to define and explore two other terms: power and authority.

Power

Management consultant Marilyn Loden defines power as "the ability to influence others, to shape events, and to achieve personal goals."[5] Power can also be understood as the control of resources, including material, informational, and human resources. Bennis and Nanus call it "the basic energy needed to initiate and sustain action," or the "capacity to translate intentions into reality and sustain it."[6] Classic

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[4] Burns, 40.

[5] Marilyn Loden, <u>Feminine Leadership: Or How to Succeed in Business Without Being One of the Boys</u> (New York: Random House, Times Books, 1985), 84.

[6] Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, <u>Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge</u> (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 17.

discussions of power define it in terms of influence on or
control over other people. However, in contemporary parlance
the word "power" is often used in the sense of personal
empowerment or agency. This type of power refers to a
person's self-definition and sense of personal significance
as well as to the capacity to achieve goals through one's own
actions. Definitions like Loden's and that of Bennis and
Nanus potentially include both sorts of power, because the
ability to achieve personal goals may or may not involve
influencing others.

In his book Resolving Conflict with Justice and Peace,
Charles R. McCollough distinguishes five different levels of
power.[7] Taken together, they identify features of both types
of power: influence on others and personal agency. He first
offers an inclusive definition: power is the ability to
influence outcomes. The different forms or levels are not
totally separate but it is possible to be powerful in one way
and not in another.

The first and most basic level is what McCollough calls
existential power.

> The existential level of power means having basic
> meaning for one's life in the face of ultimate
> reality. It is the foundation of all power. . . .
> It is the religious sense that one has a purpose
> and one's existence makes a difference eternally.[8]

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[7] Charles R. McCollough, Resolving Conflict with Justice
and Peace (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 43-50.

[8] McCollough, 43.

The next level is the power of _self-esteem_. This is positive
self-regard coming from basic confidence in one's skills,
capacity to learn, and self-discipline. The third is the
power of _social esteem_, the affirmation given and received in
one's social setting. This is a relational form of power,
the traditional specialty of women. Next is _process_ level
power, which exists when a person has a say in decision-
making through institutional channels and procedures.
Finally comes the _outcome_ level, which is what people often
mean by power: "the capacity to produce an intended result
or to gain one's interests in a communal or institutional
context."[9]

Considering the relational forms of power, James
MacGregor Burns notes that there are two extremes on the
power continuum. At one end would be absolute domination of
a person or group by the power figure. At the other extreme
would be merger between the leader and followers: the leader
over-responds to the followers' motives to such an extent
that she or he becomes almost a captive of the followers'
influence.[10] (If Burns had been writing ten years later, he
might have called this a form of codependency.) Burns
considers it important to distinguish both extremes from
leadership, which in his view involves reciprocal influence

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[9] McCollough, 45.

[10] Burns, 21.

between leader and followers.

Authority

Authority may be defined as legitimate power. Authority involves both the capacity and the right to influence others. A person who claims authority is making the statement that his of her influence is appropriate, rightful. Like leadership, authority has to do with human relationships and social agreement. In other words, a person only has authority when it is granted by the consent of other people.

The analysis of authority offered by sociologist Max Weber is still often cited in discussion of this topic. Weber identified three sources of authority. The first is rational or legal authority, which rests on a shared belief in the legality of patterns and rules, and in the right of those given positions of authority under such rules to exert power. Rational-legal authority is the bureaucratic form and involves loyalty to a system. Traditional authority, a second type, is based on a shared belief in the sanctity of traditions and the legitimacy of those representing them. This is patriarchal authority, and it involves loyalty to a person as representative of a tradition. The third is charismatic authority: "devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person and the normative patterns revealed or

ordained by him [sic]."[11] Weber's meaning for charisma is

technical, different from the popularized notion of personal

magnetism. In Weber's definition, the charismatic person is

someone perceived to be in direct contact with what the

society considers sacred.

Weber thought that rational-legal and traditional

authority are ultimately based on charisma: thus charismatic

authority--the authority of direct contact with the sacred--

is the most basic and powerful form of authority. In Weber's

opinion charisma is also the most fragile because it depends

completely on recognition by followers. All legitimacy flows

from personal strength, which is "constantly being proved."[12]

The charismatic authority is of all types the most dependent

on her or his followers.

Summary

To summarize and integrate these definitions, we can say

that leadership, power, and authority are all terms having do

with human relationships and more particularly with the

processes of influence in human relationships. At the risk

of oversimplifying, we can further say that leadership is a

process of influencing and being influenced, power refers to

the resources available for influence and action, and

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[11] Max Weber, On Charisma and Institution Building, ed.
S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
1968), 48.

[12] Weber, 22.

authority has to do with social agreement concerning the right to exert influence.

Major Themes in Leadership Theory

Since ancient times observers of the human scene have been fascinated with the phenomena of leadership and leaders. Many theories of leadership have come and gone. Some seek common personality characteristics of leaders, others look at patterns of behavior which can be learned. Some take the position that leaders are born, not made (great people make great events), and others think the opposite is true (great events make great people). In recent decades social scientists have turned their research attention on leaders and leadership, especially as it could be observed in small group settings. A number of approaches have resulted from this research. To name a few of the most prominent: (1) the important factor is leadership style, whether autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire; (2) the important factor is the combination or integration of task and relationship concerns in leadership, and (3) the important factor is the situation and how leadership style fits with a given situation.[13] The results have been less than conclusive: Bennis and Nanus

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[13] See Bennis and Nanus, ch. 1; David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson, Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982), ch. 2; and Robert J. House and Mary L. Baetz, "Leadership: Some Empirical Generalizations and New Research Directions" in Leadership, Participation, and Group Behavior (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1990).

note that decades of academic analysis and thousands of
empirical investigations have produced more than 350
definitions of leadership, but "no clear and unequivocal
understanding" of leadership or, more importantly, of
effective leadership.[14]

Two contemporary paradigms of leadership have particular
relevance for a theological understanding. One is James
MacGregor Burns' concept of transforming leadership. A
second is Robert Greenleaf's work on servant leadership.

Burns, in his book Leadership, puts forth an ideal:
transforming leadership. This is a form of human
relationship in which follower motives and capacities for
action are transformed in positive ways, and in which both
leaders and followers are changed by the relationship:

> The transforming leader looks for potential motives in
> followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages
> the full person of the follower. The result of
> transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual
> stimulation and elevation that converts follower into
> leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents.[15]

The premise is that "whatever the separate interests persons
might hold, they are presently or potentially united in the
pursuit of 'higher' goals."[16] This he contrasts with
transactional leadership, which is more a bargain or exchange

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[14] Bennis and Nanus, 4.

[15] Burns, 4.

[16] Burns, 425.

relationship aimed at aiding the individual interests of persons or groups. One person makes contact with another for the purpose of exchanging one thing for another; an example in the political realm would be the implied exchange of jobs for votes. There is no enduring purpose beyond the exchange itself.[17]

Burns' description of transforming leadership highlights the teaching function of leadership--the leader as teacher shapes perceptions and motives of the followers. The leader does not create but evokes motives which may have previously been latent. In other words, leadership is a consciousness-raising process.[18] Such consciousness-raising often involves highlighting the tensions with a person's value structures; conflict comes with the territory. Furthermore, the leader opens her or his motives to the possibility of change. Thus leader/teachers are not treating others coercively or instrumentally "but as joint seekers of truth and of mutual actualization."[19]

A similarly strong concern for the values and goals of leadership informs Robert Greenleaf's book <u>Servant Leadership</u>. Writing from a vocational context of corporate management and also out of deep religious commitment,

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[17] Burns, 4, 19-20, 425.

[18] Burns, 434.

[19] Burns, 449.

Greenleaf explores the nature of leadership as service. He
argues that the true leader is seen as servant first because
he or she _is_ servant first. That is, the leader's motivation
and identity center on serving. Leadership is bestowed
because of the authentic witness of service.[20] Furthermore,
serving has to do with making sure other people's highest
priority needs are being served. The best test, says
Greenleaf, is: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they,
while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more
autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"[21]
Discussing how human relationships ought to be structured in
a business or church, Greenleaf argues that an organization
ought to be a society of equals in which the official leader
functions as "first among equals" for the many who do the
organization's work.[22]

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Ministry and Leadership

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Minister and Ministry: Definitions and Beyond

The words ministry and leadership rarely occur together
in theological writing. Indeed, there is a built in tension
between them. The word ministry means service, ministration,
diakonia. As usually understood, leadership implies that a

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[20] Robert Greenleaf, Servant Leadership: A Journey Into
the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness (New York:
Paulist Press, 1977).

[21] Greenleaf, 13-14.

[22] Greenleaf, 80.

person is in front of or even above others; service puts the servant implicitly below or behind.

The theme of ministry as service has been strengthened in recent decades by the writing of Hans Kung. In his book The Church Kung sets forth a theology of ministry as service. He notes that biblical names for church officials avoid the secular names which were in common use at that time, names which convey a relationship of ruler and ruled. Instead, the biblical word diakonia, says Kung, carries no nuance of honor or rule. The diakonos waits at table, serves food, pours wine--in these ways rendering personal service of the most basic kinds.[23] Kung writes:

> He [sic] who has been appointed to a special ministry betrays his commission if he puts himself in the foreground, behaves as though his power were his own and thinks and acts high-handedly. He then forgets that his commission is a charism, a calling of the Spirit, who was given to him without merit on his part and without his being able to earn it in any way.[24]

If the minister leads, it is by serving and setting an example of service.

Kung, a Roman Catholic, writes about servant ministry from and to a tradition which calls its ordained people priests. The priest, in Max Weber's terms, is a representative of traditional patriarchal authority and

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[23] Hans Kung, The Church (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 389.

[24] Kung, 427.

carries the ascribed authority of office. Kung assumes this, writing that priests have "a pre-existing authority on the basis of the special commission with which they appear before the community." The community "may presuppose that a man [sic] with this commission really has authority, although [the community has] the duty of testing whether he fulfills his commission."[25] The authority of office is necessary but not sufficient; the real test of authority is service.

Pastor: Definitions and Beyond

In traditions which call their clergy minister sometimes the word pastor is used almost interchangeably. In my tradition, United Methodist, the official designation of an ordained person is pastor; minister is an inclusive term for all Christians since all Christians are called to ministry.

The word "pastor" is a leadership word in a sense, one which emphasizes the set-apart status of the one it names. The pastor, of course, is the shepherd, qualitatively different from the sheep. The shepherd leads, protects, and cares for the sheep, who lack the intelligence and independence to do those things for themselves. If we think literally, the "pastor" image is decidedly uncomplimentary to those being pastored! It also suggests only very limited mutuality and empathy between pastor and "sheep."

The word pastor and to some extent its implications are

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[25] Kung, 440.

prominent in the influential theology of ministry presented

by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James

Gustafson in their book The Purpose of the Church and Its

Ministry. In it they offered a model for ministry, that of

the "pastoral director" who concentrates on preaching,

leading worship, teaching, and pastoral counseling. They

argued that such an understanding of ministry was appropriate

to their cultural context and also rooted in tradition:

> The pastoral director of a contemporary church has
> his (sic) historical antecedent. His predecessor
> is to be found in the bishop or overseer of an
> ancient church, a man who, unlike modern bishops,
> was not primarily entrusted with oversight over
> many clergymen and local churches but was elected
> to oversee a single local church. . . . In his work
> the pastoral director carries on all the
> traditional functions of the ministry--preaching,
> leading the worshiping community, administering the
> sacraments, caring for souls, presiding over the
> church. But as the preacher and priest organized
> these traditional functions in special ways so does
> the pastoral director. His first function is that
> of building or "edifying" the church; he is
> concerned in everything that he does to bring into
> being a people of God who as a Church will serve
> the purpose of the Church in the local community
> and the world.[26]

Everything the pastoral director does is to be directed

toward the formation of persons who "are becoming members of

the body of Christ and who are carrying on the mission of the

Church."[27]

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[26] H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James
Gustafson, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (New
York: Harper and Row, 1956), 82.

[27] Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, 82.

Although Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson wrote out of a strong awareness that the ministry of the church is the work of all the people, their definition of ministry was influential in shaping the subsequent focus on the minister as set-apart professional. The professional model, like the word pastor, tends to emphasize the difference between pastor and laity. The pastoral director, the professional, has specialized training and skills and therefore can do what the "sheep" cannot.

Also, the pastoral director image is primarily an administrative or management model rather than a leadership model. The pastoral director does have leadership responsibilities as a preacher, teacher, and worship leader-- situations of one-way communication which usually accentuate the different functions of pastor and people. Administration, for Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, is primarily a matter of coordinating the goals and activities of the church community. This approach assumes that the community already exists and that its goals and methods for reaching them are already defined and accepted.

Reflection: Ministry as Service

The minister as servant, the pastor as professional-- these are still today two of the most prominent themes in theology of ministry. The first one appears, on the surface anyway, to be in tension with a leadership understanding of ministry. The second, to the extent that it speaks of

leadership, offers a practice which is inadequate for our day.

As Kennon Callahan observes, the professional, pastoral director model assumes that the world is seeking out the church and that the minister's authority is accepted and valued[28]--correct assumptions in the 1950s, when The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry was written. As it was later understood and lived out, the model of pastor as The Professional, with its stress on clergy expertise, has tended to create a dependent laity. Clergy are set apart as the special experts, the ones with knowledge and skill required to get the things done in church. This creates distance between clergy and laity and tends to disempower lay people.[29]

There are problems also with the rhetoric of ministry as service. Many feminist and other liberation theologians have observed that it is one thing to give this message of power reversal to those at the top of the heap. It is quite another message when given to women or people of color, whose social location usually tells them they must serve. Then the directive to be a servant reinforces socially sanctioned and oppressive limits.

Another problem is that language of ministry as

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[28] Kennon L. Callahan, Effective Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), ch. 1.

[29] Jackson Carroll, Ministry as Reflective Practice (Washington: Alban Institute, 1986), 8.

servanthood may be employed in such a way that realities of power and authority are denied and clarity about leadership lost. This is particularly likely to happen when those at the top of a social hierarchy speak of their "servanthood"--perhaps at the same time they are attempting to exert power coercively. To put it in McCollough's terms, they may "serve" by extending social esteem but fail to empower others at the levels of process and outcome.

Yet there are important biblical foundations for the image of minister as servant. Looking only at the gospels, a basic text is Mark 10:41-44 and parallels. As Mark tells the story, the disciples have been jockeying for position, arguing over who will have "seats of honor" in the coming kingdom. Jesus challenges their assumptions and hopes, saying:

> You know that among the Gentiles those whom they
> recognize as their rulers lord it over them
> [literally "wield authority against them"], and
> their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is
> not so among you; but whoever wishes to become
> great among you must be your servant, and whoever
> wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.
> (NRSV)

Luke puts it a little differently, saying that "the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves."[30] This and other biblical passages which describe and call for a reordering of power relationships and systems of privilege are foundational to the gospel

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[30] Luke 22:26, NRSV.

presentation of Jesus' ethics. If this is so, it is fitting and indeed necessary to think of ministry in terms of service.

The Context, Revisited

Let us return for a moment to one of the leadership word-pictures presented in Chapter 2, the flying wedge of Canada geese. If we like animal metaphors, the flock of geese seems to fit modern thinking about ministry leadership better than does the flock of sheep with their shepherd. The lead goose is different in function but not in being from the others, and whatever hierarchy of function exists is temporary.

However, the lead goose is still out front. In several ways the current context resists the person who is out front. A recent survey of United Methodist laity shows strong attitudes of resistance to out-front leadership by clergy. A representative sample of 758 United Methodists ranked the characteristics they looked for in pastors. Most highly ranked were traits of being caring, cooperative, and honest--certainly positive values. What is significant for this discussion is that the lowest-ranked characteristics--those valued by 3 percent or less--included such traits as competence, independence, determination, courage, maturity, fair-mindedness, straightforwardness, dependability, and imagination. The report concluded:

> The concern in all of this is that just at a time

when the church needs missional leadership, marked
by the characteristics included in the lower tier
of the survey, laity are registering high marks for
those kinds of characteristics generally associated
with a maintenance style of operation.[31]

There is evidence that clergywomen are among those who
shy away from leadership of the overall life of a
congregation. A recent survey of "women of the cloth"
reports that while 97 percent of clergywomen surveyed rated
themselves as effective at leading worship, only 44 percent
saw themselves as similarly effective in managing a church
budget, 58 percent at stimulating parishioners to serve
others outside the church, and 73 percent at organizing and
motivating paid staff. Commenting on these results, Carol
Noren notes that the authority and leadership needed for the
latter tasks is of a different type than that of worship
leadership.[32] She concludes that women identify and claim
authority more readily in the ministries of word and
sacrament than in the ministry of order or parish
administration.[33]

The discussion of authority in The Purpose of the Church
and Its Ministry is still relevant today for the topic of
ministry leadership. Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson

[31] Quoted in "United Methodists Survey Themselves,"
report, Christian Century 110 (1993): 813.

[32] Reported in Carol Noren, The Woman in the Pulpit
(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 53.

[33] Noren, 49.

identify three sources of a minister's authority: scripture,
the institution or community, and what they term "witness
authority" or personal authority. Institutional authority
comes from above, that is from the church hierarchy.
Community authority comes from below--it is the authority
given by the congregation itself. They define personal
authority as the inherently convincing witness of ones who
have directly experienced what they commend to others. It is
spiritual authority. "The minister is fitted to exercise
this authority by the personal crises through which God leads
him [sic.]."[34]

Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson observe that authority
is problematic in their world. The authority of scripture
and institution have been weakened to such an extent that
often the strongest or only authority source is personal
authority. The danger of this, they assert, is that personal
attractiveness or what is commonly known as charisma is the
only convincing authority for many people. They suggest that
for the pastoral director communal authority is most
important. The pastor is representative of the church as
community, speaking for the community, acting and
interpreting the mind of the community.[35]

For women in general and clergywomen in particular,

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[34] Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, 89.

[35] Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, 86.

scripture, tradition, and community have usually functioned
to deny their authority rather than support it. This leaves
personal authority as the only resource which seems
unambiguous. Indeed feminist writing often emphasizes
personal authority in the sense of authenticity or integrity.

For example, Lynn Rhodes' discussion of authority
emphasizes the authority of person as the only authentic
kind. Speaking truthfully about one's own experience is the
basis for authority, she asserts.[36] And in regards to
authority in preaching, Christine Smith writes of

> authority not as some special right or privilege,
> but rather as a quality of presence, mutuality, and
> integrity. . . a quality of humanness that is so
> persuasive and honest that it calls people into
> connection and solidarity.[37]

Thus for these feminist writers personal existential power,
or charisma in the sense of contact with the sacred, is seen
as the significant source of the authority granted by others.

Leadership and authority are relational terms, having to
do with processes of influence in relationship and with
relationally derived definitions of self and other. The
relational nature of life is a major theme of feminist
thought. Feminist writing tends to speak of relationship
primarily in terms of intimacy, closeness or affection in

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[36] Lynn N. Rhodes, <u>Co-Creating: A Feminist Vision of
Ministry</u> (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 29.

[37] Christine M. Smith, <u>Weaving the Sermon: Preaching in a
Feminist Perspective</u> (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox
Press, 1989), 48.

relationship. Yet all relationships involve dimensions of influence as well as of closeness or intimacy. The processes of leadership and influence, especially as they include conflict, have not received as much attention from feminist writers. This may be related to the way women are socialized in our culture.

In her ground-breaking book, _In a Different Voice_, Carol Gilligan described the ways that women, as a result of early experiences, deal more comfortably with the intimacy, similarity, and closeness dimensions of relationship and have more trouble with the differentiation side of things The strength of this preference is a world-view and style of being and doing which recognizes the interconnectedness of people and indeed of all reality. This preference is lived out in an ethic of responsibility which seeks to avoid hurting others. The corresponding weakness might be a reluctance to stand apart or to do what does not please others. Women are taught, as Carol Noren points out, to "subjugate their own authority for the sake of preserving peace" and to "take responsibility or blame for maintaining equilibrium in relationships."[38] This dynamic may be a factor in Letty Russell's round table image of leadership, so egalitarian that no one is differentiated as leader. Yet there are times for disturbing this circle by moving away

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[38] Noren, 56.

from it and perhaps trying to influence the direction of its motion. We cannot avoid the realities of influence and authority, and we must understand them if we are to recognize and use with self-awareness our own capacities to influence others.

This exercise in extended definitions and survey of themes and paradigms suggests a number of factors which must be taken into account in a theological understanding of leadership in ministry. First, a theology of ministry leadership must come to terms with the tensions of leading and serving, as they are suggested in the paradoxical term "servant leadership." Secondly, a theology of ministry leadership must address the significance of personal authority in today's ministry context, and what that means for the ministry leader. Third, a theology of ministry leadership must include an understanding of the effect of leadership on the followers, variously described in terms of growth, transformation, or empowerment.

Some Steps Toward a Theology of Ministry Leadership

Ministry Leadership

The term and the paradigm used from this point on is ministry leadership. The traditional word ministry retains its connotations of service, nuanced by Greenleaf's insistence that service is to foster the growth of those served. The word leadership recognizes the processes of influence, with related issues of power and authority.

This theme of service for the purpose of growth or empowerment is central to the Wesleyan theological tradition, which understands ministry as the work of laity as well as clergy. The same theme is important to feminist theology. For example, both Rosemary Ruether and Letty Russell describe service or servanthood in terms of empowerment. Service is for the purpose of empowering others; in Beverly Harrison's words, it is for building up the power of personhood in one another.[39]

Despite the difficulties associated with the language of service, a number of feminist and liberation theologians take service or servanthood as foundational for theology of ministry. For example, Rosemary Radford Ruether writes concerning the gospel concept of ministry as _diakonia_:

> _Diakonia_ is _kenotic_ or self-emptying of power as domination. Ministry transforms leadership from power over others to empowerment of others. The abdication of power as domination has nothing to do with servility. The call to ministry is not a call to become the passive supporter of the public order or the toady of the powerful in the Church or society. Rather, ministry means exercising power in a new way, as a means of liberation of one another. Service to others does not deplete the person who ministers, but rather causes her (or him) to become more liberated. Ministry overcomes competitive one-up, one-down relationships and generates relations of mutual empowerment.[40]

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[39] Beverly Wildung Harrison, _Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics_, ed. Carol S. Robb (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 12.

[40] Rosemary Radford Ruether, _Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 207.

Ruether grounds her theology of ministry in an understanding
of Jesus' language of service and his redefinition of
relationships, including the human relationship to the
divine. Jesus proclaimed a reversal of the system of
religious and social status, a reversal which does not just
turn hierarchy upside down but "aims at a new reality in
which hierarchy and dominance are overcome as principles of
social relations."[41] Also, by speaking of the Messiah as
servant rather than king, Jesus visualizes new relations
between God and humanity. "Relation to God no longer becomes
a model for dominant-subordinate relations between social
groups, leaders, and the led."[42] The minister, then, is one
who follows Jesus in seeking to embody as Jesus did the "new
humanity of service and mutual empowerment.[43]

Letty Russell's work on leadership in the rounds builds
on her earlier writing on partnership. She asserts that
"feminist styles of leadership would draw their model of
behavior from a partnership paradigm."[44] Her ideal of
partnership addresses not only the self-understanding of
ordained ministers or even of the Christian community, but
the goal for all relationships.

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[41] Ruether, 136.

[42] Ruether, 136.

[43] Ruether, 136.

[44] Russell, Church in the Round, 57.

Partnership, writes Russell, "may be described as a new focus of relationship in which there is continuing commitment and common struggle in interaction with a wider community context."[45] Partnership does not mean sameness or even equality; it does mean "treating each person as subject" in all situations, including those of unequal power.[46]

Russell argues that our understanding of human partnership and power must derive from God's self-presentation as seen in the biblical tradition. In the Bible, she writes, God is discovered as both lord and servant. This paradox of lordship and service is seen most clearly in Jesus. Both sides of the paradox must be affirmed and kept together:

> The words cannot be separated if they are to be
> understood without leading to false dualisms and
> false uses of power. The meaning of God's lordship
> in Jesus Christ is clear only in relation to the
> purpose of that Lordship, which is service. The
> purpose of God's service and subordination in Jesus
> Christ is to establish the Lordship of God's love.[47]

Problems happen when a dialectic of service and personal empowerment is lost in dualistic systems which assign to some people the permanent role of servant and to others the

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[45] Letty M. Russell, The Future of Partnership (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 18.

[46] Russell, Future of Partnership, 68.

[47] Russell, Future of Partnership, 67.

permanent status of lord.[48] The goal of Christian community

ought to be for all members to know themselves as both

powerful and serving.

Russell has several comments related to the difficulty

of servant language for women and others on whom it has

traditionally been imposed. First, she sees recognition of

power realities as a necessary first step toward dealing

constructively with them. Second, she affirms "empowerment

for the service of others," or "a way of life that includes

serving others without being subservient" as the constructive

alternative to powerlessness. Third, she cites Jean Baker

Miller's distinction between social patterns of permanent

inequality and relationships of temporary inequality

> such as those between parent and child or teacher
> and student. Yet it is in this relationship of
> temporary inequality, in which we learn how to
> maintain a dynamic tension of changing power
> relationships in the midst of growth, that is a key
> to partnership.[49]

Fourth, she quotes Paulo Friere's description of "power as

the possibility of self-affirmation together with the

affirmation of others rather than a means of controlling and

destroying the power of others."[50] She concludes that "the

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[48] Russell, <u>Church in the Round</u>, 54.

[49] Russell, <u>Future of Partnership</u>, 69.

[50] Paolo Friere, <u>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u> (Herder and
Herder, 1970), 40, cited in Russell, <u>Future of Partnership</u>
70.

key to productive use of power in partnership is the ever-changing dynamic balance of empowerment and service in human relationships.[51] She states that the leadership needed in Christian communities is not that of a fixed hierarchical model but a dynamic of leadership behavior among a variety of people.[52]

The ministry leader is a servant leader, serving God by serving the growth and development of people. The ministry leader may be but is not always the "lead goose," out in front for the purpose of bringing others along toward the goal of full humanity and community.

Empowerment themes are fundamental to a concept of ministry leadership. Without the constant awareness that service is for the growth of the other, for granting power to the best in the other, we are at risk of "serving" the worst in others. Service then turns into placating.

Authority

Several years ago my daughters gave me a coffee mug as a Mother's Day gift. On it was written, again and again, one word: "WHY?" And then the answer, written once: "Because I'm your mother and I said so!" While amusing, this theory of motherly authority does not work very well, I have discovered. The supposed authority of position, traditional

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[51] Russell, _Future of Partnership_, 70.

[52] Russell, _Future of Partnership_, 70.

or rational-legal, is not sufficient.

In the 1950s, Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson observed that as other sources of authority were eroded, personal authority became more and more primary. If that was true in the 50's it is even more true now, in our anti-authoritarian age.

In his ministry Jesus dealt with questions of authority and challenges to his authority. Two gospel texts are illustrative: the story of the healing of the centurion's slave in Luke 7, and the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 7:28-29.

At the beginning of Luke 7, we read about how a centurion sent messengers to Jesus asking him to heal his slave, who was seriously ill. As the story unfolds, the centurion explains in this way his confidence in Jesus' ability to perform the healing:

> But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go," and he goes, and to another, "Come," and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this," and the slave does it. (Luke 7:7b-8, NRSV)

In other words, the centurion understands Jesus' authority analogously to his own: they are both set under authority. Their capacity to influence others and produce outcomes derives not from themselves but from their relationship to a greater authority. If we look at the details of the centurion's comparison, the emphasis is on position within a

hierarchy. If we consider the comparison in a more global way, the point seems to be that Jesus' authority derives from God's.

In Matthew 7, it is clear that Jesus' authority is different from that of the people with ascribed authority of position in a religious hierarchy (traditional or rational-legal authority):

> Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority, not as their scribes. (Matt. 7:28-29, NRSV)

The scribes, the officially named "authorities," did not have true authority. Official position is not sufficient for authority--in the case of Jesus it is not even necessary. Jesus' authority is true to the meaning of the Greek word: exousia, literally "out of being." Jesus' authority comes from his being, and it comes from Being itself. Jesus has authority because of his relationship to God's authority. To put it in McCollough's language, Jesus had existential power to such an extent that others granted him influence on them.

Jesus' authority was that of service: he spoke as one who came not to be served but to serve. Authority, then, is derived from integrity of person as it is known in service. Greenleaf expresses it by saying that the servant leader is servant first and fundamentally; the function and identity of leader is derived.

For ministry leadership today, the necessary and real

authority is personal and religious authenticity--being in
contact with the reality of God in our lives and conveying
that reality in such a way that it has the ring of
authenticity. The gospel texts discussed above remind us
that this kind of personal, existential power does not leave
us isolated or dependent upon our own resources. Our power
is connected with and empowered by a larger reality and
larger power, which Christians have always called the Holy
Spirit. Personal authority is the witness of the Holy Spirit
speaking through us.

The Holy Spirit in Ministry Leadership

The Holy Spirit is ever present and active within and
among us. The Spirit is God's strong power at work in the
embodied and everyday world, the divine life seeking to shape
us in its reality. The Spirit is present in all people and
all situations. In the Wesleyan theological tradition, the
Spirit's work is understood in terms of divine-human
cooperation or synergy. God's work is to some extent made
possible by human activity which cooperates with the divine.
The leader is cooperating with the Spirit by removing
obstacles and also adding resources to the Spirit's power
which is at work in individuals and groups.

In Paul's theology, the Spirit is present and manifest
in the community of Christ, the church. The gifts of the
Spirit are given to individuals but not in isolation, always
in the context of community. Not everything that happens in

community is the work of the Spirit, but the Spirit is always present. The power of the Spirit produces mutual empowerment of community members.

My experience in the very early months of new congregation development supports this view. When I first began the work, I felt alone and often powerless to accomplish such a large task. Then after a few months, when a group had come together and had begun to "take hold," the power of the Spirit began to build within us and among us. As I sensed growth and energy in others, I felt empowered. I was more able to convey strength and a confident vision, which then further supported the sense of power within the group.

Leonardo Boff has developed an ecclesiology based on an understanding of the way the Spirit is present and at work in the church. For Boff, the church is the "real presence of the Holy Spirit."[53] Charism, the gift and power of the Spirit, is the energizing and organizing principle within the church.[54] There is a fundamental equality of all people within the church:

> All are people of God. All share in Christ, directly and without mediation. Therefore all share in the services of teaching, sanctifying, and organizing the community. All are sent out on a mission; all are responsible for the unity of the

[53] Leonardo Boff, Church: Charism and Power (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1988), 144.

[54] Boff, 154.

community; all must be sanctified.

Boff's picture of the church inverts the traditional
hierarchy assumed by the Roman Catholic Church.
Boff's picture of the church inverts the traditional
hierarchy. He diagrams his understanding and how it
contrasts with the official model:

Official Model	Boff's Model
God	
↓	
Christ	Christ-Holy Spirit
↓	↓
Apostles	Community-People of God
↓	↓
Bishops	Bishop-priest-coordinator
↓	
Priests	
↓	
Faithful	
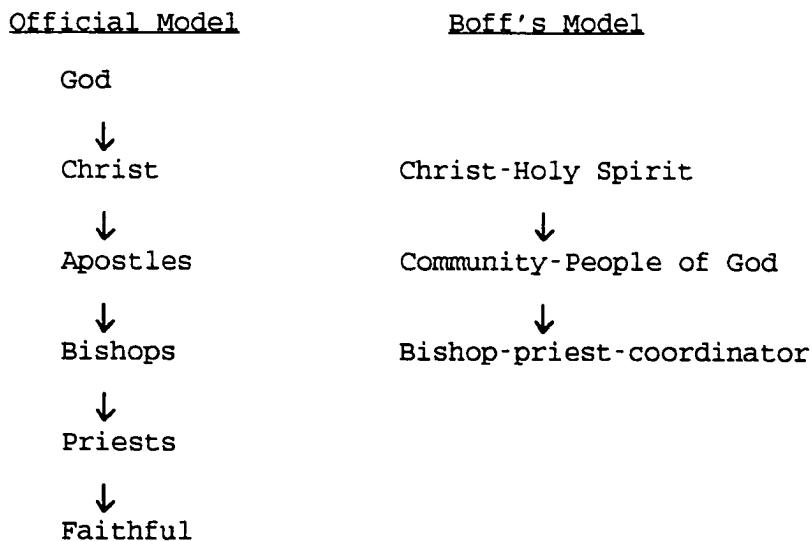
Boff's picture resembles ' ˌ ˈ inverted pyramid pictured
in Chapter 2. However, it is important to note that in this
model the authority of bishop or priest is derived from a
sharing in the power of the Holy Spirit, not from the
community alone. In this way Boff conveys something that is
missed in a purely sociological analysis. If we re-draw his
picture to reflect an awareness that Christ and the Holy
Spirit are not only above but also around, within, and below,

we come back to a circle.[55]
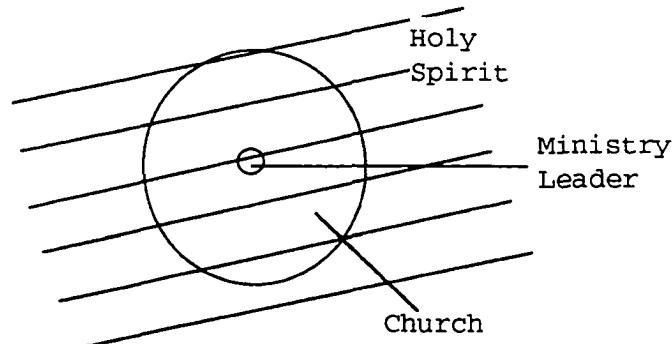
The Holy Spirit's Power for Empowerment

Ministry leadership as empowerment must be grounded in a strong awareness that the Holy Spirit is present in all people. As Boff puts it, in the community of the Spirit "there is no non-charismatic member, no one is useless, everyone occupies a decisive place in the community."[56] Each charism, each gift or ability, is a manifestation of the Spirit's presence in the members of the community. Empowerment is the work of encouraging and supporting the Spirit's power and presence in each person.

Ministry leadership as empowerment assumes that power is not a scarce resource operating according to zero-sum rules. The increase of one person's or group's power is not always at the expense of someone else's. Power is understood as influence in a context of mutuality, rather than total

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[55] This diagram is my own construction.

[56] Boff, 157.

control in a win-lose situation.

Burns' model of transforming leadership is relevant here. The ideal is a relationship of mutual influence and empowerment, in which the motives of followers and also of leaders are evoked and shaped toward values of humanity and community and in which people's competencies and commitments are strengthened.

Summary

Ministry leadership: both words need to be given emphasis and held in balance. The word ministry is a constant reminder of service as the primary role we are given in Christ. It is the way of Jesus and his direction to his followers. The word leadership also describes the way of Jesus, who calls us to move out front, to set directions, to pull people toward a goal even as he did. When we lead it is for the purpose of serving, and the service we give is for the purpose of releasing and strengthening the best in others.

The authority for ministry leadership comes from integrity of person, from religious authenticity. This personal authenticity is the witness of the Holy Spirit flowing through us. The Spirit is the source and the power. In that way personal authority is derived from a larger power which is always and everywhere present. We are not isolated or thrown back on our own resources but are part of a larger power that is already at work within and among us.

Ministry leadership is for the empowerment of persons and community. Ministry as service does not mean keeping people comfortable or doing what they are not willing to do. It means serving the work of the Spirit within and among people. Because of the Spirit's work there can be relationships of mutual influence and empowerment among members of the community, including the ministry leaders. The leaders and those led are changed and led toward the fullness of life which is God's intention for all of us.

CHAPTER 4

Leadership Tasks in New Church Development

and Resources for Practice

Introduction

The questions raised and discussed in Chapter 2 were

"Who am I?" questions, those of identity and role. These

topics were explored from several standpoints: of authority

and power, of the relation of service to leadership, of

personal authenticity, and of empowerment. In this chapter

the question shifts to a concern with "What do I do?"

Specifically, what ought to be the leadership priorities for

starting a new church?

The concept of empowerment can be a link between these

two kinds of discussion. As stated in the summary of Chapter

3, ministry leadership is for the empowerment of persons and

community. That is, the concern is both with the individual

persons with whom we minister and also with the collective

reality formed when people come together in community. The

two are interconnected. A community in which people can be

known for who they genuinely are, to the extent that they

choose, is an encouraging and empowering context. It is

encouraging--literally filling people with courage and

confidence as they discover and become more fully who they

are.

The shaping and building up of community is especially

important in a new church start because the community is

exactly what does not yet exist. The task of the ministry leader is to bring community into being and help it take shape as a human context which goes beyond itself in service and empowers its members for their day-to-day living.

The shaping of community, or to use a New Testament metaphor, the "building up of the Body," involves at least two main processes.

The first process relates to the goals, purposes, or "mission" of the community. Goals, purpose, and mission need to be developed first in imagination and idea. This is often called the development of vision. It involves the creation of a picture which exists in imagination, a description in words of what is not yet, conveying the feeling of a hoped-for future. Next, the goals, purpose, and mission must be communicated repeatedly with energy and specificity. The imaginative picture is embodied in the spoken word, in gesture and action. The vision is constantly kept before people, brought into their minds' eyes in a way that calls them to make the vision real through step-by-step, believing action. This is the first leadership process, that of developing and communicating vision.

The second process has to do with the nature of the community itself. Every human organization has a distinctive character or culture which grows out of shared history, habits of thought and behavior, patterns of "how we do things around here." Leadership is involved in shaping the

character of the human community which is being formed. This is a second leadership process, that of shaping the culture. The first process addresses the question, "Where are we going?" and the second, "What are we like as a community, while we're going there?" These two, the development and communication of vision and the shaping of culture, are two of the leadership processes involved in starting a new church.

The leadership task of visioning puts the leader at the front of the wedge, showing the way and pulling others forward. Shaping of culture puts the leader in the center of the circle and, as Hesselbein would say, leading from the heart.

Empowerment is a third leadership process. Empowerment takes place as people have the opportunity to use their skills and competence in meaningful ways. Empowerment is both a personal and a community process--individual empowerment is encouraged or discouraged by the community context, and each person's sense of empowerment or powerlessness in turn affects the group.

Vision, culture, and empowerment are interconnected. The vision for a community, its ideal imagined future, includes a mental picture of the community's culture. And it is the culture of a group--the whole set of habits and rules, spoken and unspoken--which either promote or thwart empowerment of people and realization of vision.

Vision and voice, culture, and empowerment--Jackson

Carroll identifies the same processes, with slightly

different labels, as the central tasks of church leadership.

He takes his cue from earlier work on leadership, done by

Philip Selznick. Selznick described the leader's task as

three-fold: defining the organization's mission and role,

embodying that purpose in its organizational life, and

helping the organization and its members give expression to

their distinctive values in the face of threats from without

and within.[1] Carroll takes these as parallel to his own

functional definition of the church as a community of

meaning, belonging, and empowerment:[2]

> Using these categories, we can construe the
> leadership task in a similar way: as meaning
> interpretation, which includes articulating the
> church's primary mission as the body of Christ;
> community formation, building organizational
> structures and relationships that express the
> church's Christian identity; and supporting the
> congregation's public ministry, helping the church
> and its members to live as Christ's body in the
> world.[3]

To these three core processes of leadership I would add

a fourth: attention to and nurture of the person of the

ministry leader. Especially in a context such as new church

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[1] Philip Selznick, Leadership in Administration
(Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957), cited in Jackson W.
Carroll, As One With Authority: Reflective Leadership in
Ministry (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 98.

[2] Carroll, As One With Authority, 83.

[3] Carroll, As One With Authority, 99.

ministry, which puts heavy pressure on the ministry leader, the personal dimension of leadership cannot be ignored. Both self-nurture and self-awareness are needed if the leader is to function with authenticity and stamina.

The body of this chapter is arranged around these four leadership processes: vision, culture, empowerment and the person of the ministry leader. The discussion of each leadership process is related to the special circumstances of a new church. Guidelines for practice are drawn from a variety of sources primarily in management and social science.

Vision: Imagining the Future

The importance of vision in leadership is one of the primary themes in contemporary management and social science literature. Leadership is seen as a process of energizing and empowering people to move toward a vision, an "ideal and unique image of the future."[4] The vision is an ideal: a goal to be realized in the future. It is unique: fitting the context of the people to whom it belongs. The organization's vision is a focus that gives meaning to its present situation and action, as moving toward particular, desired results. Vision must express and increase the intensity and commitment of the leader and the people.[5]

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[4] Kouzes and Posner, 85.

[5] Bennis and Nanus, 28.

Our human response to a compelling vision arises from
"some of the most fundamental human needs--the need to be
important, to make a difference, to feel useful, to be a part
of a successful and worthwhile enterprise."[6] As we give our
energy to desiring and realizing a particular vision, these
needs become more conscious and stronger. The very process
of forming and conveying of vision is itself a consciousness-
raising and energizing process, an essential part of the
transforming leadership described by Burns.

Developing and conveying a vision is an imaginative
process more than a rational one. The vision must be able to
engage feelings and creativity, to generate intensity and
commitment. Vision works on the emotional and spiritual
resources of the people singly and as a community.
It is perhaps a commentary on our contemporary context that
some of the most passionate descriptions of the importance of
vision come from the context of business and not the church.
The human hunger to be part of something significant, and the
power of this hunger to motivate, is one of the most
pervasive themes in secular leadership literature. We in the
church need to find at least that clarity and passion about
vision. Surely the biblical tradition offers us endless
resources for vision, word-pictures conveying an ideal and
distinctive future--the realm of God, the Body of Christ, the

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[6] Bennis and Nanus, 92-93.

new Jerusalem, God's _shalom_, and so many others. Yet maybe those images are so far removed from our everyday reality that for many people today they remain too distant from us to energize our vision. So, in the church, developing vision would need to involve taking those biblical images and making them specific to the context of the particular congregation.

Vision also emerges from the present context, from the needs of people's life situations, from their own deep desires to make a difference. Visioning, then, involves attending to the present in order to discover and describe its significance. As Burns puts it, leaders encourage followers "to commingle needs and aspirations and goals in a common enterprise. . . [and] lift people into their better selves."[7] The development and communication of vision is a basic component of transforming leadership.

From whom does the vision come, from leader or people? Secular literature puts vision as a responsibility of the leader. Again citing Burns, people in leadership have responsibility to (1) first clarify their personal goals, (2) decide who they want to lead, (3) decide where they want to go, and (4) figure out how to overcome obstacles.[8] Ministry literature most often speaks of the vision emerging from the

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[7] Burns, 460-461.

[8] Burns, 460.

people, with the leader taking a consensus-building role.[9]
Which should it be? In starting a new church, this is not an
abstract issue. The dilemma is: At the beginning there is so
little shared history or bonding among people that consensus
with depth is usually out of the question. Consensus depends
on trust, which takes time to develop. Consensus also
depends on perceived commonalities, which take time to be
discovered and developed. On the other hand, shared decision-
making contributes to empowerment, especially when the
decisions are about the most important issues in the life of
a community. And the process of developing vision can
contribute to the growth of trust and commonality.

Once developed, the vision or imaginative picture must
be communicated, made vivid by word-pictures. This is done
through the personal communication of a vision. Sometimes
referred to as "voice," it involves much more than the spoken
word. It is expression and embodiment of the vision, done
through action as well as speech.

Sally Helgesen and others have observed that women's
styles of leadership tend to emphasize voice over vision.
Vision defines the ends, while voice is the means for getting
the vision across. Voice, says Helgesen, is more
interactive; while vision implies more detachment from what
is seen. Voice does not have to be a speech; it can invite

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[9] William J. Phillips, lecture given at the School of
Theology at Claremont, 15 Oct. 1991.

conversation, dialogue. Voice is an expression of a unique

personality, an instrument for conveying and guiding vision,

for modeling and persuading.[10]

Gloria Steinem is a model of what Warren Bennis calls

"leading from voice," or "movement leadership." In her

women's movement leadership, she began without a position

from which to lead--without traditional or rational-legal

authority. In reflecting on her experience she distinguishes

this movement leadership from corporate leadership:

> Movement leadership requires persuasion, not giving
> orders. There is not position to lead from. It
> doesn't exist. What makes you successful is that
> you can phrase things in a way that is
> inspirational, that makes coalitions possible. The
> movement has to be owned by a variety of people,
> not one group. . . . There is no human being who's
> going to do what I say. None. Not even my
> assistant, who is too smart. The only power I have
> is the power of persuasion, or inspiration.[11]

Reflecting on the leadership styles of Steinem, Betty

Friedan, and Frances Hesselbein, Bennis concludes that the

underlying issue in this type of leadership is trust, both

developing it and keeping it. He identifies four personal

leadership patterns which tend to generate and sustain trust:

> 1. Constancy. Whatever surprises leaders
> themselves may face, they don't create any for the
> group. Leaders are all of a piece; they stay the
> course.

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[10] Helgesen, 221.

[11] Quoted in Warren Bennis, On Becoming a Leader
(Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1989), 159.

2. <u>Congruity</u>. Leaders walk their talk. In true leaders, there is no gap between the theories they espouse and the life they practice.

3. <u>Reliability</u>. Leaders are there when it counts; they are ready to support their co-workers in the moments that matter.

4. <u>Integrity</u>. Leaders honor their commitments and promises.[12]

Shaping the Congregation's Culture

In order to lay the theoretical groundwork for a discussion of culture I will rely on the work of Edgar Schein, a leading theorist and practitioner in organization development and one who has written extensively on the topic of culture and leadership.

The following discussion assumes broad application of the word culture--that is, culture can refer to small social units as well as large, to families, small groups, and congregations as well as to national or racial groups. Edgar Schein's definition of culture will be a starting point. He describes culture as a pattern of basic assumptions-- invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration--that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation

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[12] Bennis, 160.

to those problems.[13]

The culture of an organization such as a congregation, then, is a learned product of group experience which develops over time. It is a response to the set of circumstances in which a group finds itself, including circumstances external and internal to the group. To put it more colloquially, culture is the whole pattern of "the way we do things around here."[14]

An organization's culture is usually observed indirectly, by the artifacts and actions which can be seen and heard. According to Schein, these are at the first level of culture, closest to the surface. This level includes artifacts and creations of technology and art, plus visible and audible behavior patterns. They themselves are observable, but their meaning may not be easy to decipher. At the second level are the group's values, their beliefs about what ought to be. Members of the group probably have at least some awareness of these values and can talk about them. At the third and deepest level are the group's basic underlying assumptions. These are beliefs, usually unconscious, about the way the world is. They include implicit decisions about such issues as the group's

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[13] Edgar H. Schein, _Organizational Culture and Leadership_ (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), 9.

[14] Terrence E. Deal and Allan A. Kennedy, _Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life_ (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1982), 4.

relationship to its environment, what is considered real and true, and understandings of human nature, human action, and human relationships.[15] These basic assumptions tend to be non-confrontable and non-debatable yet they are the forces which actually guide behavior. There tends to be little variation within the group on these assumptions.[16]

Culture is a leadership priority, says Schein; for him, "the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture."[17] Taking that quote at face value ascribes great power to the leader, but on the other hand the development of culture seems to have a life of its own and seems to generate its own power. In a very short time a new group begins to form its culture: it develops a language, attaches meaning to events, and develops assumptions about itself and its environment, assumptions which then operate as filters on perception.[18] And, of course, the leader is herself part of the milieu and so can only influence from the inside, as a participant.

Nevertheless, Schein's description of the process of culture formation and his comments on the role of leadership in that process are relevant to the concerns of new church

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[15] Schein, 14.

[16] Schein, 18.

[17] Schein, 2.

[18] Schein, 41.

leadership. He sees culture formation as a problem-solving process centering on his middle level of culture, that of values. The process goes like this: at first, every member of the new group comes with a set of assumptions, probably diverse. As group life proceeds, problems come up and the group is faced with the need to solve them. The problems may relate to internal organization and dynamics of the group, or they may relate to issues of survival in the surrounding environment. Certain values of group members, especially of the leaders, are translated into proposed solutions. The proposed solutions which are actually tried and found successful are probably repeated. If they continue to be successful they become more and more taken for granted and move down, so to speak, to the level of assumptions. Gradually the values and assumptions of the group become shared and validated by common consent as the correct definition of the way things are.[19]

According to Schein the leader's job, especially early in the development of the organization, is to shape the values of the organization and thus shape the culture. Such factors as what the leader pays attention to, how she reacts to critical incidents and organizational crises, what is deliberately modeled and taught, and what is rewarded all are influential in shaping the organizational culture. He

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[19] Schein, 50-69.

considers secondary and less important such things as the
organization's design and structure, its systems and
procedures, physical space and buildings, stories and myths,
and formal statements of organizational philosophy.[20]

Two features of Schein's description of culture
formation deserve emphasis in relation to a new church start.
The first is his observation of the role of anxiety in
culture formation. In the early stages of a group's life,
there is a high level of anxiety because so much is unknown
and untested. This leads to "higher levels of ambivalence
and projective identification, leading to regressive group
moods."[21] Other systems thinkers have observed that human
systems are inherently anxious.[22] The unhealthy patterns
which develop in a group often result from anxiety and
efforts to reduce anxiety. One of the ministry leader's jobs
is to manage her own anxiety and help the group deal with
anxiety in constructive ways.

Schein also comments on the significance of a leader's
response to crisis in the organization. The response will
reveal the deeper assumptions of the leader as well as
aspects of the culture that have already developed. Thus

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[20] Schein, 221.

[21] Schein, 159.

[22] Peter L. Steinke, How Your Church Family Works:
Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems (Washington,
D.C.: Alban Institute, 1993), ix.

crisis is an opportunity, in that it makes possible new development of the culture.[23]

In conclusion I would note that if Schein is correct, those leader actions which are the most significant in shaping culture are often the ones which have to do with the informal system rather than the formal one. They are often implicit rather than explicit, they are non-verbal as well as verbal and thus come from the deeper levels of the person. They assume and require personal congruence because they cannot be simulated.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a contemporary buzzword, yet the concept is fundamental in the biblical witness. In the beginning, Genesis tells us, God created human beings and breathed into us the breath of life--God empowered us. God created humans in the divine image for the purpose of sharing in God's creative power as it is lived out in the world.

Jesus's ministry was a ministry of empowerment. During his life on earth Jesus went about healing, teaching, releasing people from the grip of all sorts of destructive forces, thus empowering them to be fully who they were meant to be and in this strength continue his work on earth. "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than

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[23] Schein, 64.

these" Jesus told his followers.[24]

Paul and the Deutero-Pauline writers also make empowerment central to what the church is about. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians that the gifts of the Spirit are given to all people, for the purpose of building up the whole community, the body of Christ. A basic text for theology of ministry is Eph. 4:11-13:

> The gifts he gave were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (NRSV)

The question for ministry leadership is: how can we contribute to developing a human setting in which people do experience the growth of their own sense of personal significance, competence, and effectiveness in action?

Rosabeth Moss Kanter defines empowerment as the giving of both influence and access to resources.[25] In a chapter discussing empowerment in corporate settings, she asks the question, "what is it about some organizations that makes power more widely accessible?"[26] She and others who have

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[24] John 14:12, NRSV.

[25] Rosabeth Moss Kanter, The Change Masters: Innovation for Productivity and Entrepreneurship in the American Corporation (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 116.

[26] Kanter, 156.

posed this question in business contexts point to a number of factors which contribute to empowerment.

Kanter observes what she calls a "culture of pride, a climate of success."[27] There is an emotional and value commitment between the person and the organization, a feeling of belonging and making a difference. In such a climate "success breeds success": pride in past action stimulates confidence which stimulates action which stimulates more confidence.[28] She also notes the importance of available "power tools" of information, resources, and support. Also needed are "structures for innovation," including open communication, network-forming arrangements such as teams, and decentralization of resources.[29]

Another perspective comes from Kouzes and Posner, who observe that some people and groups are characterized by what they call hardiness, or an attitude of resilience toward stressful events. Clues that indicate a hardy response are: that people consider the tough situation interesting, feel they can influence the outcome, and see the situation as an opportunity for development. Hardiness has to do with commitment, control, and challenge. To foster commitment, say Kouzes and Posner, offer more rewards than punishments.

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[27] Kanter, 149.

[28] Kanter, 150.

[29] Kanter, 156.

To build a sense of control, choose tasks that are challenging but within the person's skill level. To build an attitude of challenge, encourage people to see change as full of possibility.[30]

Bennis and Nanus identify these four factors which support empowerment:

1. Significance--knowing what you do is important

2. Competence--developing skill

3. Community--reliance on one another toward a common cause

4. Enjoyment[31]

Kouzes and Posner assert that power is built and enhanced when:

1. People work on tasks critical to the organization's success

2. They experience discretion and autonomy in their efforts

3. Their efforts are visible and recognized

4. They are well connected to others of influence and support.[32]

Note that both lists start the same way: with the importance of the task itself. Empowerment has to do with

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[30] Kouzes and Posner, 67.

[31] Bennis and Nanus, 82.

[32] Kouzes and Posner, 179.

the sharing of significant work--significant to the
organization and also to the person doing it. And what tasks
are most significant to the person doing them? Often those
that involve learning, growth, challenge, designing or
discovering something new. Note also that for this condition
to be met, the task needs to both be significant and be
perceived as significant by the person doing it. So then, we
might say that the first concern in creating an empowering
environment is to set up situations where people are doing
what is important to them and to the organization, and they
realize the importance of what they are doing.

All these writers on empowerment emphasize the
importance of attitudes--toward power itself, toward people,
toward the tasks to be done. For a human context to be
empowering, there must be an attitude toward power which
recognizes it as an expandable and not a scarce or zero-sum
resource. There must be an attitude toward people which
trusts and supports their competence. Kanter, for example,
speaks of a reward system that invests in people before they
carry out projects and shows confidence in their ability to
succeed. The leader might, for example, move people into
projects for which they must stretch, trusting that they have
the capacity to do so.[33] The goal is a balance of high
expectations which encourage people to do their best, and a

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[33] Kanter, 154.

willingness to bring them along step-by-step, without giving up on them.[34]

The leader's attitudes toward self and others are empowerment factors also. Kouzes and Posner emphasize leadership style that involves working side-by-side with others and thus strengthening them.[35] The leader functions both as model and cheering section. Kouzes and Posner also encourage planning what they call "small wins," incremental increases in skill and commitment taken "one hop at a time."[36]

Empowerment requires access to resources, including the resources of other people which are accessed through communication. Thus the leader whose goals include empowerment must pay attention to available resources. Do people have the information and materials needed to do their work? Do they have the kinds of links with others that not only allow for information exchange but encourage the sharing of ideas which becomes synergistic?

Chapter 3 described the five types of power identified by Charles McCollough: existential power, self-esteem power, social esteem power, process power, and outcome power. In an empowering setting, all five can be strengthened in different ways and at different times.

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[34] Kouzes and Posner, 242-43.

[35] Kouzes and Posner, 167.

[36] Kouzes and Posner, 219.

The most fundamental concern of ministry is to help people discover and nurture a sense of existential power. The church, first and foremost, is a community of worship and a community in which personal spirituality is encouraged to grow. It is essential to realize that this dimension of power is integrally connected to self-esteem and social esteem, which are developed in the context of human relationships. For self-esteem to grow, humans need experiences that teach us we are lovable and capable. We need the support of accepting and faithful relationships. To illustrate the point by describing its opposite, note Carol Gilligan's observation that when the women in her study felt abandoned by others they abandoned themselves. Disconnection from others leads to struggle with self-worth. Supportive relationships embody divine care and make possible the growth of self-esteem that enables us to see ourselves as worthy of our own care.[37]

However, focus on existential, self-esteem, and social esteem power must not be an excuse to ignore or abuse power on the process and outcome levels. These two types of power are the traditional strongholds of men, while many women continue to focus on the social esteem level. Emphasis on relationship can be construed as dealing only or primarily with social esteem and lead, on the one hand, to entangled

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[37] Gilligan, 124.

and codependent relations. On the other hand, feminists may emphasize social esteem power in ministry to such an extent that we ignore the realities of process and outcome power within institutions, including the church.

Our secular society tries to bolster people at the levels of self esteem and social esteem without paying adequate attention to the other levels. The search for self-esteem and relationships proceeds frantically and ends up hollow if it lacks spiritual depth and grounding. Nor does the preoccupation with self and relationships make up for the powerlessness many people experience at the level of larger institutional and societal processes and outcomes.

To repeat: ministry leadership for empowerment must be concerned with all these dimensions of power.

The Person of the Leader

I conclude this chapter on theoretical principles for action with a return to the topic of the leader as person, or the person of the leader. This is not a new topic. In Chapter 3 I emphasized the prominence of personal authority in today's societal context and noted the special stresses that produces for any person in leadership and particularly for a woman in leadership. In this chapter the discussion of vision and voice, culture, and empowerment, returns repeatedly to the importance of the leader as person. Clearly this is a topic which requires more discussion.

Advice frequently given to pastors of new congregations

is, "Take care of yourself, so you don't burn out. Take a
day off so you don't get too tired." This is usually framed
in practical health-maintenance terms. Without a doubt it is
good advice on that level. However, the importance of this
bit of advice goes beyond the practical and common-sense
level.

At a deeper level, the counsel becomes, "Take care of
yourself because who you are and how you are make up the most
important factors in your leadership. Take care of yourself
so that you can know and manifest the work of the Holy Spirit
in you and through you. Take care of yourself so that you
increase in personal integrity--wholeness--without which you
cannot truly minister or lead."

The leadership tasks described in this chapter all
require that the ministry leader seek to grow in personal
wholeness. In Bennis's view, leadership from voice, or the
communication of vision, depends on the trustworthiness of
the person whose voice is expressing the vision. Schein
observes that the leadership function of shaping culture
depends more than anything else on the consistency of the
leader's pattern of response. Empowerment probably cannot be
encouraged by a person who does not herself experience
personal power.

The capacity to observe life situations and learn from
them, a significant leadership skill itself, also requires
personal groundedness. Bennis describes what he calls

innovative learning, which is active and imaginative.

Innovative learning requires listening and anticipation, to

participate in shaping events as well as being shaped by

them. He contrasts this to two other kinds of learning,

which he names maintenance and shock learning, in which we

are reacting to that which we cannot avoid. The skills of

innovative learning, listening and anticipation, are less and

less possible as a person's own level of stress increases and

personal integration decreases.[38]

After interviewing many women and men in leadership,

Warren Bennis concluded that, most basically, leaders are

those who have learned to express themselves fully:

> So the point is not to become a leader. The point
> is to become yourself, to use yourself completely--
> all your skills, gifts, and energies--in order to
> make your vision manifest. You must withhold
> nothing. You must, in sum, become the person you
> started out to be, and to enjoy the process of
> becoming.[39]

Bennis observes that the leader's self-expression tends to

evoke a fuller self-expression from others. Speaking

theologically, the manifestation of God's image in one person

tends to free up a fuller expression of the imago dei in

another.

It may be that this process happens most naturally when

barriers of power and role are lessened or eliminated. Rabbi

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[38] Bennis, 76-79.

[39] Bennis, 111.

Laura Geller observed this in the way some of her congregants
responded to her leadership during her first year of service
as an ordained rabbi. She quotes two comments, the first
from a middle-aged woman:

> Rabbi, I can't tell you how different I felt about
> services because you are a woman. I found myself
> feeling that if you can be a rabbi, than maybe I
> could be a rabbi too. For the first time in my
> life I felt as though I could learn those prayers,
> I could study Torah, I could lead this service. I
> could do anything you could do. Knowing that made
> me feel much more involved in the service--much
> more involved with Judaism! Also the service made
> me think about God in a different way. I'm not
> sure why.

The second comment came from a man in his twenties:

> Rabbi, I realized that if you could be a rabbi,
> then certainly I could be a rabbi. Knowing that
> made the service somehow more accessible for me. I
> didn't need you to 'do it' for me. I could 'do
> it,' be involved with Jewish tradition, without
> depending on you.[40]

Although the last part of the quote may make us smile or
wince, Geller puts a positive meaning on it. She speculates
that the reason behind these comments is that with female
clergy there is less power differential and social distance
between congregants and rabbi or minister. This makes it
more possible for people to identify with the ministry leader
and thus imagine themselves doing what the leader is doing.
This is empowering to people's sense of potential competence.

Ministry leadership, because of its very nature,

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[40] Laura Geller, "Reactions to a Woman Rabbi," in On
Being a Jewish Feminist: A Reader, ed. Susannah Heschel (New
York: Schocken Books, 1983), 210.

requires personal awareness and self-care. Leadership is

relational--the leader is in a relationship of mutual

influence with others. In any relationship, it is important

to maintain a balance between connectedness and separateness.

In leadership relationships, we would seek balance between

being in the midst of the circle and in front of the wedge.

Especially for professional helpers, so often "people

pleasers," the separateness side of the balance is an

important part of self-awareness and self-care.

Family systems theory, especially as articulated by

Edwin Friedman, presents an approach to leadership which

addresses these dynamics.[41] To describe it in very general

terms, a family systems approach looks at relationships

rather than individuals as the primary human reality and

attempts to change families or other human systems by

changing the relational process within those systems.

In Friedman's view, the key to leadership is the self-

differentiation of the leaders. Self-differentiation is the

capacity to define one's own goals apart from the

"togetherness pressures" of the family or congregation. It

is the capacity to be "I" while remaining connected.

Friedman contrasts this understanding of leadership to

two alternatives, which he calls the charismatic and

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[41] Edwin Friedman, _Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue_ (New York: Guilford Press, 1985.

consensus approaches. These two are the "bookends" of usual approaches to ministry leadership, one relying on influence by attractive persuasion and the other on a slower, less directive process which responds to the emerging voice of the group. Friedman names three problems with the consensus approach: it tends to produce solutions with less imagination, to produce more anxiety, and to give strength to the extremists. In other words, it is too reactive.

Seeing leadership as an organic process, Friedman takes as key the leader's capacity for self-definition. The leader needs to be a non-anxious presence, maintaining self-differentiation while remaining part of the system. The specific behaviors that go into this are: stay in touch with others, take clearly defined positions, and respond to resistance or sabotage by staying the course in a non-anxious way. Friedman believes that the self-differentiation of any one person is a leadership action and that it has the effect of freeing others to be more differentiated and less anxious.[42]

At the risk of including too many lists, here is one more from Bennis and Nanus. They offer guidelines which they name "5 key skills of positive self-regard":

1. The ability to accept people as they are, not as you would like them to be.

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[42] Friedman, 220-49.

2. The capacity to approach problems and relationships in terms of the present, not the past.

3. The ability to treat those close to you "with the same courteous attention that you extend to strangers and casual acquaintances."

4. The ability to trust others, even if the risk is great.

5. The ability to do without constant approval and recognition from others.[43]

Friedman's talk about self-definition is closely related to the observations Bennis makes about self-expression. Self-definition, self-expression: both are spiritual issues, issues of our wholeness and personal growth. Even in the midst of the intense task pressures of new church ministry, it is essential for those in ministry leadership to take time for personal nurture, so that we may be open to the Spirit's work within and through us.

The development of vision, the shaping of culture and the empowerment of all: these are leadership task priorities for the ministry leader in a new church setting. They are expressed, embodied, and lived out through persons, particularly the person of the ministry leader. They are also expressed, embodied, and lived out in particular situations. We now turn to the particulars of one new church

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[43] Bennis and Nanus, 67.

and explore, through case study and reflection, ministry leadership situations which illustrate these task priorities. The task of Chapter 5 is to bring practice and theory into dialogue with each other, seeking the wisdom which experience offers to the conceptual knowledge presented in the preceding pages.

CHAPTER 5

The Practice of Ministry Leadership: Case Study

> One does not move from theory to practice in a
> linear, technically rational fashion. One leads,
> or attempts to do so, by reflecting in the midst of
> action, bring vision and discernment together in a
> new kind of artistry that has a rigor and
> discipline of its own.[1]

Introduction

My goal in this chapter is to bring the conceptual

material presented so far into explicit dialogue with my

experience of the actual situation of leading the development

of a new church. A case-study method is employed, with

special focus on selected critical incidents. The discussion

is structured around the first three leadership processes

discussed in Chapter 4. Discussion of each process includes

description of what has taken place and how I have functioned

and understood myself as a ministry leader. Following the

description is a reflection on the ways in which these

particular situations illustrate and/or modify the

theological and practice-oriented understandings of ministry

leadership discussed in the previous four chapters. The

concluding chapter will return to the last leadership issue,

the person of the ministry leader. This last issue is in a

sense the foundatational concern of the whole project.

In order that the reader can understand the important

particulars of the setting, here first is some background

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[1] Carroll, As One With Authority, 147.

information to make the events and their context
comprehensible.

The Context of the Congregation

The geographic and cultural context of this ministry is
southern California. More particularly the location is
Rancho Cucamonga, a city of about one hundred thousand people
which is located about forty five miles east of Los Angeles.
During the 1980s Rancho Cucamonga was one of the fastest-
growing population centers in California and therefore in the
nation. The city was created in the 1980s by combining three
previously unincorporated areas. City leadership has
featured a strong planning orientation geared to attracting
business and commercial land uses. Housing accommodates a
wide socio-economic span, with low-rent and subsidized
apartments as well as middle class and upper middle class
tract-type housing. Middle-income housing predominates.

The population is predominantly young, with a median age
of about thirty-five. The majority of people are Caucasian,
about twenty percent Hispanic, about ten percent Black, and
small minorities of other groups such as Asian and Pacific
Islander. In typical California fashion many residents
commute to work, generally driving in toward the city and
frequently driving long distances.

The city parks department offers many recreational
activities and classes; other than that there has not been an
effort to develop community services or contexts in which

people can come together and experience a sense of belonging.

Rancho Cucamonga and Fontana are typical of Southern California cities in that their landscape features houses, roads, and buildings geared to bringing in revenue. City planners have made provisions for plenty of shopping centers and some commercial and light industrial land use. Other than schools there are very few buildings which have a function of developing human community. There are few places to gather, to meet other people, to find the kind of human contact that helps people feel they belong to a place or a human context. The physical features of the neighborhoods themselves, especially the newer ones, contribute to the potential for isolation. Many housing developments have walls around the outside of the whole neighborhood. The fronts of the houses feature garages and small windows, almost never porches large enough for sitting.

The isolating tendencies of land use and architecture have been intensified by cultural factors of recent years. In the past few years the Southern California economy has taken a dive into severe recession, with negative effects on morale as well as pocketbook. For several years people in many organizations were facing layoffs, moves, or anxiety about the possibility of these events. People expressed increasing fear of gangs and of random violence. In addition, all of Southern California including Rancho Cucamonga was becoming more and more racially and culturally diverse. When

neighbors looked so unfamiliar, people tended to respond by staying inside with doors and windows closed. Tendencies to fear and isolation increased.

In the mid-1980s, the leadership of the Riverside District of the United Methodist Church identified the eastern part of Rancho Cucamonga as one of its priorities for a new church start. In July of 1991 I was appointed to begin developing the congregation. It was a two-part appointment, with 80 percent time as associate pastor at another United Methodist church. Twenty percent of my time was to be devoted to finding prospects for the new congregation and beginning the ministry. There was no program budget. At that point no preliminary work had been done by the District or Conference to publicize the project or identify interested lay people. The local people involved consisted of a loose advisory group of pastors and lay people from surrounding congregations, none of whom saw themselves as potential members of the new church.

The balance of the appointment shifted to a 50/50 split in January of 1992, again with salary support provided but no program budget. By that time I had organized and implemented three door-to-door survey events, plus I had knocked on plenty of doors at other times and done what I could in order to get the project known and on the grapevine. A Bible study of ten people began in November 1991. In March 1992 we rented space at a Lutheran church and began a weekly Sunday

evening service, with an initial average attendance of about 25. That same month I convened a planning committee of twelve people, including two from nearby congregations and ten who saw themselves as members of the new ministry. In July 1992 I was appointed full time to this ministry, which the District and Conference were calling the Etiwanda Area Ministry. Four families from Ontario First U.M.C., where I had been Associate Pastor, decided to join the new congregation. Funding for both program and salary support was provided, on an eighteen-month budget and with an implied commitment of decreasing pastoral salary support for at least two years afterwards. No land purchase had been made or capital funds committed, although some funds of this type were potentially available.

The planning committee made decisions to rent a small store-front office as well as worship space at an elementary school. We made plans to begin regular Sunday morning worship on the last Sunday of September. We were awarded a special Conference evangelism grant of $10,000 for program purposes, which we earmarked half for direct mail advertising and the rest for a 10-hour a week, one year only, staff position in Christian education. We began worship with 78 people in attendance at the first service. Two weeks later we started up our children's Sunday School program. The initial group of adults was young, with the majority of people between age twenty-five and forty-five. The majority

were caucasian, with some African-Americans and Asians, including several interracial families. On any Sunday it was common for a quarter or more of the participants to be children under the age of ten.

Vision

At the very beginning of a new church start, nothing tangible exists. What exists is someone's idea, the beginning of a dream of what might be possible. What exists also is the context in which the new church will develop. This includes the context of the immediate community as well as the larger cultural context. There is a practical side to context too--the resources and constraints which converge on the particular situation. Vision emerges from these initial factors, the beginning dream and its context, as they interact with the developing character of the organization itself and as the leadership vision develops and matures.

The Beginnings

At the very beginning of this new church start there was an initial vision which had been developed by a district planning committee, including the District Superintendent. Describing the initial dream or hope of the planning group, the Superintendent defined two major goals. First was that the new congregation was to be a regional church, serving the growing population in two Southern California cities. The new congregation would become a large, program-oriented church to serve the new housing areas in Rancho Cucamonga and

Fontana, the ones already built and the ones planned for later development. Its permanent location would ideally be about midway between two established, older congregations. The other goal was that the congregation would be inclusive and its membership reflect the demographic diversity in the area.

As I began work, I brought my own ideas and dreams about what the congregation could be. Perhaps most importantly, I brought positive personal experience with a new church. When we lived in Washington state my family and I were active members in a new congregation. We began our involvement a year after the church was founded and stayed with it for six years, through much growth and two phases of a building program.

Along with this positive bias for a new congregation, I also brought with me an ecclesiology and style of working with people. Some of that was conscious, some not. No doubt some of what I believe and assume is still unconscious to me. Let me name the most important assumptions as I am aware of them. First, to me the church is most basically and most significantly a worshiping community. The life of the congregation is for me centered in its worship life. Second, I think that worship and other aspects of the congregation's life ought to be participatory. I like to see people involved and active, with leadership and participation spread among a number and variety of people. Third, I believe that

a healthy congregation has a balance of inward and outward attention. Inward attention involves all that nurtures the personal spiritual growth of members, including worship, study groups and classes, the arts, and groups for socializing and support. Outward attention involves outreach in the sense of evangelism and also service to the community and world. Fourth, I do agree with the Riverside District planners that the church is called to be an inclusive community. To me that means welcoming people who are dissimilar in race, age, education, socio-economic status, theology, and politics. As far as style of ministry goes, I prefer a participatory style which is willing to share power and authority.

These were the starting points. I began ministry leadership with goals defined by other authorities and with my own values and assumptions. Another starting point was the specific situation, with its distinctive contextual features described above. Resources and limits on resources were also part of the initial picture. To these starting points I brought my observations and hopes. As other people became involved, their observations, hopes, and energy also contributed to the development of vision in this new church.

Early on I noticed that I needed to be ready to explain, and explain again, what a church is. I had entered an unchurched social setting in which people often had only a foggy notion about church and certainly did not assume its

importance or necessity. I found myself reflecting on my own

experience and what I had noticed and heard from others,

about why they wanted to worship, why they wanted to gather

with others in a congregation. I watched and listened,

seeking words to describe those aspects of human experience

which could be so powerfully expressed, even brought to life,

in a faith community. I came to think that under the

busyness and isolation of people's lives there were desires,

however deeply buried, to connect with others and with God,

to find a human context in which one could belong and be

known, and to join their efforts with others for the good of

community and world.

I tried to put these three motivations into simple

words. The phrases went through a number of changes and then

settled down to a three-part goals statement. I began to say

that the goals of our church would be to bring people

together in caring community, promote spiritual growth, and

serve the larger community and world. I talked about these

goals over and over again, in different ways and in different

contexts. They showed up in sermons and in the unofficial

sermons at meetings. When we had documents such as worship

bulletins and newsletters, the three goals were always there.

I knew at that point that this three-part statement was a

temporary description of who we were, too vague for the long

haul and also lacking congregational ownership. My hope was

to come up with some sort of statement that would begin to

shape the development of the church in basic ways and at the same time not be so directive as to channel prematurely the emerging community's sense of vision. This was, I suppose, my way of dealing with the question about whether the vision comes from the leader or the people. At the beginning, something has to come from the leader. But that something should leave room for the growth of a shared vision.

I used this three-part statement as a way of organizing my own priorities and work on shaping the program of the congregation. In other words, I tried to keep all three goals in mind and to strive for balance among them in the emerging ministry of the church.

In retrospect I would make two observations about this formulation of goals. The first is a comment on the language. The statements contain no God-language or other words to identify them as specifically Christian. Nor is there mention of worship or the church as a worshiping community. If I were to do it over, I would change this in order to more adequately reflect the nature of the church.

The second observation is that the goals did become owned by the congregation, at least to a certain extent. For example, when we began work on developing a real mission statement what I heard was, "I thought we already had one. It's on the bulletin every week." At a deeper level, the whole idea of balance between community and personal growth, between inward spirituality and outward service, is becoming

part of the character of the congregation.

<u>Critical Incidents</u>

The two incidents described below were significant in the development of the church's vision. The first is the process of selecting a name. The second is the development of a mission statement.

<u>Choosing a name</u>. "Etiwanda Area Ministry" was obviously a temporary name. What I hoped to do was live with it until some sort of group had developed enough of a community select a real name. As with most other things, there was a constraint. In this case it was time. We would need a real name by the time we were ready to advertise for our first morning worship.

Within two months of beginning the planning committee and the evening service, I began to talk to the planning committee about church names. Every Sunday evening I put up a large sheet of paper for suggested names. After a few weeks we had a list of about sixteen possibilities. The planning committee decided to involve all interested people in the final choice of a name. The process would be that the committee would pick four or five finalists, to be discussed and voted on at a gathering open to all participants. We set a date for a barbecue at someone's house, and two planning committee members agreed to lead the process of discussion and selection.

The day for the choice came and a group of nineteen

people gathered. The two leaders presented the committee's list of four short and simple names. There was discussion about what would be important in a name--that it not refer too narrowly to one place, that it be easy to remember, that it not sound exclusionary or "flaky." The talk was hesitant and limited; some people knew each other only a little. Someone said, "What happened to that name, Christ by the Mountains, that we had on the long list. I liked that one." So it was added back, bringing the list to five. There was a preliminary poll and three names came to the top, including Christ by the Mountains in third place. We decided to eat dinner and then make the final decision.

Over the next few hours the discussion continued informally; people were chewing on the decision. The phone book came out and other church names were checked out for similarity and possible confusion. "We could have a great logo," said someone who then drew a first draft. Several people talked about the significance of the nearby mountains to their feelings about the place where they lived. I moved in and out of the conversation, feeling sure I knew the outcome and that this long and unusual name would not be the choice. But of course it was, on the third go-round, in an eleven to eight decision.

Shortly after this people headed home; it was getting late. Over the next few months feelings and opinions about both the name and the process emerged and it was clear that

while we had made a decision we had not reached a consensus. "This is too long and complicated" and "People will think we are a fundamentalist church" were the concerns. The second, of course, was most significant. Several people wondered out loud whether the name pointed to something with which they could possibly identify.

These questions were to some extent mine as well. I found myself in the position of needing to communicate a name and therefore an identity which had not been my preference and about which I had very mixed feelings. In other words, I as leader was being treated to an early experience of an important decision going in a direction other than mine.

What I did was to work with the name theologically, bringing out its incarnational quality and using Paul's metaphor of the church as Body of Christ. To call the church Christ by the Mountains means that Jesus Christ is present and real here and now. It means that the church is called to be Christ in this place, by the mountains, and to live out Christ's work in our setting. I talked also about the mountains as orienting factor, as part of God's creation and manifestation of God's creative power. I and others kept drawing logos. I joked about confusion with the name: "Let's see, is Christ on the mountains or by the mountains or in the mountains, and is it one mountain or how many?"

Gradually as the church developed, the character of the community modified and defined the name, even as at first the

name seemed to so dramatically modify and define the community. All the people who had questions about this choice stayed in the church and continued to add their distinctiveness. Now the name is part of us: last fall when we started an elementary-age fellowship group the name they picked was Kids by the Mountains.

If we had it to do again, I might delay the name decision until a later date and also make the decision by a consensus process rather than by voting. A vote is always win-lose and holds the possibility of polarizing. On the other hand I suspect that any consensus process at that stage in our group's life would have been a shallow agreement at best, masking the real disagreements which might still be present. The vote had the effect of pointing out differences among people, which in this case had the effect of promoting dialogue rather than cutting it off. Over the months following the name decision, some participants talked about the dynamic in this way: "We thought everyone was satisfied but we found out later that some people were bothered." So the event had the effect of sensitizing people to the reality that there is sometimes more going on in discussion and decision than first meets the eye.

To picture my leadership style in this process, I would say that I was sitting at the kitchen table rather than flying at the front of the wedge of geese. While I exerted influence on the design of procedure and on the criteria for

choosing that short list, when the day came to decide I sat as a participant, allowing others to move the process along and offering my opinion as one among all the others. Even now a year and a half later, I am not sure how to evaluate that move. I have come to think that we chose the best name on our list, and that the real leader in the process was the Holy Spirit, working among us.

Mission statement. The second important incident began about six months later as the congregation began to develop a mission statement. The process was quite different, as was the character of the group.

Most of the development up to that point had been in the church as worshiping community. First of all, there had been significant growth in numbers, with worship attendance almost tripled. Patterns and customs were beginning to develop, both in the order of service and in the informal times before and after worship. People were organized to do the worship activities--we had worship leaders, choir and other musicians, ushers, Sunday School teachers, people to fix coffee and people to set up and take down the furniture every week. We had the opportunity to arrange our own worship space, even though it was in a school cafeteria, and to collect artifacts which expressed and further shaped who we were. In short, the church was beginning to take on personality and develop history.

Once again I took the position of the lead goose,

believing that two things needed to happen. First, it was time for this growing church community to participate in defining its mission. Second, it was time to shift the balance so as to include more outreach along with the internal community development.

One day a participant came to see me, to express her opinion that the church needed to focus more on outreach and mission in the sense of service to others. Already having this in mind, I asked her if she would be interested in working with a group whose initial task would be to help the congregation develop a statement of mission in terms of overall purpose, then concentrate on the outreach and service part of that mission purpose. We convened a group which became the most active committee in the church during 1993.

The group developed a highly participatory and consensus-oriented approach. It began with an all-church meeting to set the stage. My job was to give a biblical perspective of the mission of the church, and committee members led preliminary discussion on participants' ideas of what the church was about. Next, people were given an opportunity to sign up for one-time-only small group meetings in homes, to explore further the topic of the church's mission. At each meeting the people were asked the same set of questions, which began with questions like "What brought you back to this church after your first visit?" and moved on to "What needs do you see in this community that you think the church

ought to be addressing?" Soon the committee had collected

pages and pages of notes and faced the task of pulling them

together into some sort of statement. We wrote a draft

mission statement and sent a copy to everyone in the

congregation. Two Sundays in a row everyone who entered our

worship space was greeted with newsprint summary sheets of

all the comments shared in the meetings. Space was provided

for more comments to be added. There was very little

additional input. The committee convened yet again, made a

few changes to the statement, and dedicated it on Easter

Sunday 1993:

> Our mission as a church is to share the love of God. In
> an inclusive community of worship and service, we will
> welcome all people and embrace our diversity. By the
> grace of God, we seek to model our purposes and
> activities after the life and teachings of Jesus the
> Christ. We will follow his example to celebrate the
> gospel, pray, teach, nurture, act with concern, and care
> for our brothers and sisters. We will expand our caring
> and love from the church to the community at large. We
> will move toward healing ourselves and our world.

Since last Easter we have used the statement in a number

of ways. We read it in worship periodically, when new

members are received and at other times as appropriate. A

poster version sits next to the name tag holder on Sunday

morning. I put this condensed version on Sunday bulletins

and on the address page of the church's newsletter: "Our

mission is to share the love of God. In an inclusive

community of worship and service we will welcome all people,

follow the example of Jesus the Christ, and reach out to the

community and world." The statement itself provides both a clear and an open-ended identity that helps us remember who we are and where we are going.

The most valuable part of the mission statement process was the discussion that went on in small groups. People had the chance to hear from each other and to discover shared experiences and shared perceptions. They also had the chance to hear themselves talk about the church and why they considered it important. That process of speaking has the effect of building commitment.

Lay leadership developed during this process as well. In large part this was due to the strength and skill of the two people who co-chaired the committee but it went beyond that. The discussion and participation served a culture-shaping function, illustrating that in this church many share in the responsibility, decisions, and action. Also the very speaking of hopes and feelings seemed to increase people's commitment. They found common ground with others who shared their same hopes and feelings.

The committee was surprised and somewhat puzzled about the small amount of feedback the rest of the congregation offered on the first draft. Perhaps everybody agreed with everything; perhaps nobody cared very much: which was it? The statement probably does reflect the priorities of those who participated in the discussions: that the church be warm and welcoming, that we be inclusive, and that there be a

balance of inward and outward concern.

Intuitively I suspect that the congregation as a whole owns the name more than the mission statement at this point. The name is simpler and more vivid, easier to associate with visual images and memories of experience. In addition, the name has been around longer; nearly a year longer, a significant amount of time at this point in our development. Related to the mission statement, my task in ministry leadership now is to do what I can to make the statement real, both real in people's minds and real in the program of the church. Talking about it repeatedly, calling attention to it in multiple ways, restating and simplifying it, illustrating it and pointing to illustrations, doing it with humor--all these are means to this end. My other task, a more important one, is to keep the mission statement in front of me and in front of all who make plans and decisions for the church, so that our program ministry develops in a way that embodies our mission vision.

The Vision Process: Reflections

Transforming leadership, says James McGregor Burns, happens when the person in leadership identifies and articulates, and thereby evokes and strengthens, the latent motives shared by the people in a given situation, including the leader. This is a good description of what happens in the process of developing vision in the new church context. The role of the ministry leader is first to observe with a

goal of discovering what is present in the people and the context that could unite and move the group in a common direction. To speak theologically, the ministry leader's task is to notice and articulate what God might be doing in the particular circumstances of people, place, time; and in what way God might be calling the group toward the future. As Burns notes, this is a process of education in which the leader repeatedly describes, explains, and pictures both the present and the future. It is also a process in which leaders and followers alike are changed and in which new leadership emerges.

On the other hand, in our experience the process has not been completely smooth or without confusion. Along with shared motives, there are also motives which differ. There are differences of opinion, perception, values, and goals. The leader is both setting direction and responding to the direction of others. In defining vision, the leader is most often in the lead goose position, out in front of the wedge. But it is also necessary in the middle of the circle sometimes, hearing from others and receiving their influence.

In Chapter 3 Gloria Steinem's comments about movement leadership were quoted. For her, leadership involves defining a situation and communicating goals in a way that makes it possible for people to come together. This kind of leadership, then, seeks to strengthen the commonalities among people rather than sharpening the differences. Such an

approach is particularly needed in a new congregation, in which people are coming together from a variety of life situations and backgrounds. In order for community to form, people must discover what they share that can bring them together across the differences that threaten to divide.

Shaping the Culture

Culture in the sense used here refers to the pattern of basic assumptions which guide a group's behavior and can be observed indirectly in its artifacts--actions and objects.[2] Culture develops as a group learns to adapt to its internal and external environment. A significant responsibility of leadership is to shape the culture of an organization.

The Beginnings

The culture-shaping process overlaps with the development of vision. In our particular case, the mission statement reflects some of the important values and assumptions which make up the congregation's developing culture. Before the mission statement existed some of those values and assumptions were already in place and could be inferred from observable features of the church's life. To go back farther in time, some of them came from my values and assumptions and my efforts to convey them as ministry leader. The people who responded to the early invitation to be part of this venture were those who found those values and

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[2] Schein, 9.

assumptions congenial for them.

In his book <u>Organizational Culture and Leadership</u>, Edgar Schein states that the leader's most important job is the shaping of culture. He also stresses the importance of crisis events in the development of a new organization's culture, and particularly the importance of the leader's response to these crisis events.

To begin, let me restate my initial assumptions and also my convictions about what church can mean in a context such as the one where I minister. Of primary importance for me are spiritual growth, the experience of supportive community which provides a context of belonging, and the ability to act together with others to benefit the community and world. The emphasis on spiritual growth means recognizing worship as central. Spiritual growth also relates to the other two in that it is nurtured not only through worship, but potentially in other ways including human relationships, study, opportunities to use and develop personal talents and skills, and meaningful service. In addition to these three goals I also believe that the church ought to be participatory, inclusive, and balance attention to personal and internal group life with service and outreach.

In order to develop a welcoming and spirited worship community in our context, I have tried from the beginning to set a tone which would convey warmth and accessibility to newcomers, particularly people who are not used to being in

church. The order of service and appearance of the bulletin reflect these considerations, striving for simplicity and avoidance of jargon and in-group references. The worship space is set up with the goals of making sure people are greeted and making it easy for them to find what they need as they enter (bulletins, nursery, information, seats, etc.).

In order to promote an inclusive congregation, I have worked to make our advertising and publicity as inclusive as possible. For example, our first direct mail fliers pictured an interracial and intergenerational group of people. I have consciously worked to develop leadership that reflects diversity, both Sunday morning worship leadership and the leadership of the congregation. In preparing the liturgy and developing sermon material, I pay attention to inclusiveness also, drawing material and illustrations from a variety of traditions.

There are a number of ways in which I and others have worked toward a participatory congregation. First, worship is highly participatory, with singing and other responses by the congregation. This is one characteristic about which I often receive feedback. As much as possible, the various tasks that go into making church happen on Sunday morning are spread around among many people. After a person has been attending for a month or so, I usually try to get him or her involved in something that is part of the work of the congregation--maybe bringing refreshments one day or being a

greeter Sunday morning. There are jokes about this: "In this
church you come twice and they put you on a committee!" One
type of participatory work often happens spontaneously.
After worship is over we must put everything away and return
the room to its previous condition. Often when the official
"take down crew" starts work, other people help too, with
newcomers often including themselves in this. Although noisy
and sometimes confusing, this participatory work has a community-
building function.

A new church setting is one in which a ministry leader
needs to model a participatory style. On Sunday morning and
other times, I will do whatever needs doing as long as it is
within my capability. There is a danger here, that people
will think that I will do it instead of them. So it is
important to do both things at once--pitch in and do whatever
is needed, and at the same time keep recruiting other workers
and giving away tasks. This is an authentic feature of
servant (ministry) leadership in a new church--serving the
real needs of the community and at the same time working
oneself out of the current service job.

According to Schein, the shaping of culture happens
primarily in informal and often indirect ways, by the small
gesture and the simple action, repeated again and again. All
of the above examples are illustrations of Schein's point.
In addition, though, as leader I have also spoken explicitly
and repeatedly about these same cultural qualities,

describing and illustrating in preaching and through other
communication channels what kind of church we are trying to
develop and how that relates to what is happening.

Critical Incidents

An important leadership responsibility in the area of
culture-shaping is to convey a sense of confidence in the
future and in moving toward the future. This is very
significant for a new church, especially in the early stages
when there is such a discrepancy between the reality of the
present and the hoped-for dreams of the future. It is the
ministry leader's job to communicate the belief that the
hoped-for future is possible, and that we can move toward it.
The two critical incidents reported below had to do with
crisis in this confidence.

Moving out. The first incident was part of a larger
trend taking place in the environment around us, which is one
reason it became a strong crisis. The incident had to do
with people moving out of town.

In January 1993, less than four months after our first
morning worship service, the congregation's strongest
leadership family announced that they were moving out of the
state. The man had received an unsolicited and unexpected
job offer, too good to refuse. In less than a month he left
to start his new position, with his wife and son staying
until the end of the school year. He had been the newly-
chosen administrative council chairperson and the usher

coordinator; she was the one who took care of Sunday refreshments and had coordinated the congregation's first mission project. Together they were the informal relationship leaders in the congregation, the ones around whom people gathered. Within a few weeks of their decision to move, Hughes Aircraft announced plans to close all operations in Southern California. Two other leadership families, including the church treasurer, were Hughes employee families. An additional two moderately-involved families in the congregation were potentially affected by the Hughes closure.

This turn of events mirrored what was going on in the community and region. Many people in Rancho Cucamonga and the surrounding area were being laid off and/or moving. Those staying often expressed the wish that they too had the opportunity to move. There was a mood of discouragement and reluctance to put energy into the local setting, now defined as undesirable.

The family's departure was the first good-bye we had said to someone in the congregation, and I wanted to make sure that we said it with style. We sent them off with prayer and blessing, and with a party after worship. The leadership vacuum was filled immediately as far as official jobs were concerned. I pointed to that as positive, a sign of strength and resilience in the congregation. The second family moved in September, sent off also with blessing and

partying, and the third is still here and rethinking the decision to go.

In a sense the incident is still going on. Periodically I hear anxious comments about "everybody's moving away." Now and then there are statements about how "as soon as you get close to someone they move." I've responded by acknowledging the feelings and at the same time expressing the perspective that things will be all right, not everyone will move, and that the leadership and resources we need will be available.

I would say my biggest challenge as leader has been to manage my own anxiety and sense of loss in ways that did not augment the anxiety and grief of the congregation. The people who moved were significant to me personally and I felt their leaving as a loss. There were times when I too wondered if "everyone would move away," and where the leadership and other resources would be found. Yet it was my responsibility as ministry leader to be, in Edwin Friedman's terms, a non-anxious presence communicating confidence in the future.

The second critical incident also involved issues of resources and confidence. The incident was our first stewardship campaign, which took place in the fall of 1993.

Dealing with money. The background to the second incident includes the realities of financial resources and their limits as well as the early-emerging characteristics of the congregation's culture. Initial financial support for

the new congregation was provided by outside sources, with the expectation that the congregation would gradually pay more and more of its own expenses. The congregation's share increased dramatically at the beginning of 1993, then took another smaller step up in July of that same year. Everything went along all right in the early months of 1993 but then by summer the cash crunch began to hit. Small increases in giving were not keeping pace with larger decreases in outside funding.

In the early stages the congregation did not have a strong culture of financial giving. The majority of participants had been previously unchurched and so did not have established personal patterns of giving. Most of those who came from backgrounds of regular church participation, regardless of their own giving, expressed discomfort with the whole topic of money in the church. There was strong resistance to asking people for money, and some negative personal experiences with guilt-inducing stewardship tactics. Nobody except my spouse and I had ever participated in a stewardship campaign. Life situation factors entered too --in a congregation of predominantly young families expenses are high and resources usually limited.

In the early months of the congregation, mention of money was infrequent and gentle. At the end of 1992 we conducted a very low-key campaign for 1993 pledges. Letters with pledge cards were sent along with budget and program

information, several lay people spoke in church, I gave a
stewardship sermon, and there was an invitation to make a
pledge. The effort was so low-key that by summer some
administrative council members had forgotten that it even
took place.

When summer came around the problem of financial support
became evident to the Administrative Council. In a way this
served a positive function by forcing the issue. The council
decided to make stewardship education an ongoing process by
providing information regularly and by having a lay person
speak briefly on stewardship in worship once a month. The
council also decided to implement a fall campaign, to include
visits to every household in the church. The stewardship
chairperson would give leadership to the campaign and be
responsible for recruiting monthly speakers. She started
calling members with this request and found no takers.

Things went better when she began recruiting members to
make stewardship visits to the homes of other members and
participants. She did her recruiting early; all twelve
visitors were confirmed more than a month before the visiting
Sunday, Nov. 14. This was probably a good thing, because as
the visiting day came closer the mood in the congregation
grew worse. Worship attendance fell. Those who tried to
recruit people for other activities, such as providing dinner
items for the visitors' training event, met with resistance.
The level of general grumbling went up, with comments about

how "the church is asking too much of us." The visitors'
training dinner and meeting was notable for the number and
variety of anxious comments. On the other hand, three lay
stewardship speakers were recruited out of a goal of four.

During this turbulent period, I was trying to do several
things. One was to speak forthrightly about money, in terms
of the spiritual issues related to money and the realistic
needs of the church. A second was to make sure other people
also were speaking about money. I asked a lay leader from
another new congregation to lead our visitors' training. I
asked a retired pastor who had been a church fund-raiser to
preach on stewardship on November 7. Third, I considered my
own stewardship and, with my husband, made decisions about
our own financial support of the congregation. Fourth, in
speaking about the visits themselves I emphasized the
relationship-building function as well as fund-raising. Last
and probably most important, I tried to convey by everything
I said and did that I was absolutely confident of the
campaign's success.

One wild card was present in the mix. The previous
spring I had made plans to be out of town at a conference
early in November, the week right before visiting Sunday. I
was not scheduled to return until late Thursday November 11,
and November 14 was the day for visits. What this meant in
practical terms is that I had to leave last minute
arrangements up to other people. What it meant emotionally

was that I needed to stay non-anxious enough to leave this negative mood and important time. In all honesty, the main reason I took the trip was that my plane tickets were non-refundable. However, in retrospect I think my leaving sent a message that neither the campaign nor the church ultimately belonged to me. It was up to the congregation to take responsibility.

Visiting Sunday came, and as I sat in the church office and heard people's reports it became evident that the day was going very well. Not only was the campaign a success financially, but the response to the visits was upbeat and positive. The church leadership made initial plans for another visiting Sunday in the spring, this one not related to stewardship. The success was a surprise to the visitors themselves. As the Administrative Council chairperson put it, "I'm a betting man, and I wouldn't have bet on this one."

Without a doubt there will be other times when we face financial problems and morale issues. The fall stewardship campaign was a significant event, though, and perhaps a turning point. The mood of the congregation improved subsequently; so did worship attendance and other measures of participation and energy. Several persons and families slipped away and disappeared around the time of the campaign, people who had been on the margins and expressing ambivalence. Perhaps the reason is that the culture shifted toward that of a church whose norms are for higher

commitment.

Shaping the Culture: Reflections

My experience in the early stages of this congregation's development supports Edgar Schein's observations about the anxiety and ambivalence present as a group's culture begins to form. In our case, when both internal and external contextual factors came together in a way that produced anxiety the effects were particularly strong. My role as ministry leader in this process was to hang on to a confident vision and stay non-anxious. This does not mean denying or avoiding the issues. It does mean that while acknowledging difficulties and feelings the leader needs to stay steady and not lose heart.

Two other factors in the new church situation add to the swirl of emotions pressing on the leader and everyone else. One is the reality that a new congregation is changing rapidly and frequently. New people are coming, groups and structures and patterns of action are in flux. For many people, perhaps most, this much change evokes discomfort. A second human reality is that when nearly all the human relationships in a group are newly forming, they lack the reliability and trust of enduring friendship. Conversation often stays on the surface, on safe topics. Both these factors contribute to a lack of groundedness or stability in the culture.

It is important to recognize that as the culture takes

shape there is loss as well as gain. The church becomes more particular, excluding some possibilities as it embraces others. An example was our stewardship campaign and the sorting out process it brought. As the cultural norms shifted to favor more commitment, the people who did not want to be that committed sorted themselves out.

All this is important for the ministry leader to recognize, especially since new church pastors live in a success-oriented cultural climate. Pick up any book on church growth or "church planting" and the message comes through: follow this formula and you will achieve success. Your ministry will achieve a constant upward pattern of increasing outward signs of success. In addition, the people in our churches live in a success-oriented climate. It is important for all of us to learn--and to remind ourselves often--that life includes set-backs as well as successes. In the middle ages there was a liturgical dance frequently used in worship. The dancers, in a line, moved ahead in a pattern of three steps forward and one step back. The dance was considered to be a good illustration of what the Christian life is like. Perhaps we should teach that dance in our new churches. Certainly we who are in ministry leadership should remind ourselves and teach others that God is with us and loves us during the steps back as well as the ones that take us forward. There is a rhythm to life, including the growth of a church, and the Holy Spirit is at work in all

parts of that rhythm.

Empowerment

In Chapter 4 I posed a question for ministry leadership: How can we contribute to developing a human setting in which people experience the growth of their own sense of personal significance, competence, and effectiveness in action? I will now explore that question in relation to this new church ministry.

I believe that a basic mission of the church is for the empowerment of people at a spiritual level. This is what Charles McCollough calls existential power: the sense that one's life has foundational meaning and purpose. In the contemporary context, the process of spiritual empowerment is facilitated in a context which offers people permission to be themselves and explore life and its meaning, and to experience acceptance in that being and that exploration. Growth in empowerment is a challenging process. A supportive community can provide the kind of support which strengthens people for that challenge. Returning again to McCollough, we can say that such a context encourages the growth of self-esteem and social esteem power, which for humans are integrally related to spirituality.

As previously stated, I believe that the root of an empowering church community is the worship experience. Along with the kinds of attention to worship already mentioned, we chose one other way of shaping the culture which I now

123

suspect was more significant than we realized at first.

Any church growth book or article will tell you that younger, unchurched people do not like the idea of dressing up for church. Following the experts, we decided to emphasize an informal tone for worship, including permission for casual attire. Publicity and advertising for our worship always included the statement: "Casual clothes welcome." The comment I started to hear was, "You can come here and be yourself." (Perhaps there was a negative side too, that you can come and not take things seriously. This may have contributed to the tone leading to our stewardship struggles.) Of course, by itself something like a casual clothes norm would be insignificant or misleading if there were no other ways to actualize the idea that people can be themselves. More important are opportunities for people to get to know each other, learn together, and give and receive support.

With that in mind we have initiated programming emphasizing small groups. At this point such programming includes two study groups and a program of short-term fellowship groups which meet monthly for about six months. At this point about fifty adults are involved, including all the people who are in leadership within the church.

Another kind of empowerment which can happen in the church flows from the personal energy which comes with developing and using one's own God-given capacities. This is

a more doing-oriented, as opposed to being-oriented, kind of
power. In a congregation such as Christ by the Mountains,
many adults work at jobs in which they only use a small
segment of their ability. Especially for those in
professional positions, the cognitive, left-brain self is
usually emphasized. Sometimes the pent-up other side of the
self then cries out for expression.

The process of expressing a larger part of one's whole
self can be contagious. To give a personal example, I have
accepted a challenge to express a particular side of myself
by acting as the piano accompanist for our choir. Not only
has this been fun for me but it has pushed me to grow in my
piano skills. I have had to practice! There have been
plenty of wrong notes in worship but even so I suspect my
enjoyment of this job is evident. Besides myself, there are
a number of other musicians at worship, either occasionally
or regularly. This musical expression has proved contagious.
One man, an accomplished jazz saxophone player who had not
played for years, dusted off his sax and now plays regularly
with the pianist and guitar player to accompany
congregational singing. Two households have acquired pianos
in the past few months, more because the adults want to play
than for children to have lessons. We have an engineer who
makes beautiful banners and an accountant who gives great
children's sermons and teaches the adult Sunday School class.
It does seem that the expressiveness itself is both

empowering and contagious, leading to continued and additional personal empowerment.

Empowerment in the church is also the empowerment of the whole. In the beginning of a congregation's life this involves organizing and beginning the work of the church, for the building up of the whole community. In practical terms this means things like finding task leadership, staffing committees, developing job descriptions, motivating, coordinating, and evaluating.

On one level I led this process by standard church procedure. We constituted a nominating committee, tried to figure out who would be good at what, made use of all the guidelines we could find regarding committee job descriptions, set out expectations as clearly as possible, and said thank you often and enthusiastically.

Yet on another level the situation of setting up a brand new structure has its own special characteristics. Everything that will happen is being done for the first time in this setting and by this group of people. When you start, the committees themselves exist only in plans and imagination. There is no history, no notebook from the previous year. Different people deal with this in very different ways. Some are able to develop the structure and procedures basically out of nothing. Others, who would probably be fine in a situation with more established structure, find themselves at a loss. A challenge for the

ministry leader is to work with people in different ways according to their needs, so as to support and develop their confidence. Another challenge is that there is not just one committee to organize but a whole set of them to develop within a short period of time. There is probably not enough of the leader's time or energy to go around.

Reflecting on a year's worth of efforts at this, I would say two things. One is that a participatory style of leadership is at this point very important. Going back to the circle image, the ministry leader and the committee chairperson are both in the center of the circle, working collaboratively. Also, in the early stages it is essential to let go of perfectionist ideas. For me that meant reminding myself again and again that perfection was not the goal, and then affirming the progress that did happen.

Critical Incidents: Empowerment and Control

When empowerment really starts to take place, then the ministry leader can move away from the center of the circle. Two incidents describe both that process of empowerment and also one personal issue it may raise for the leader, the issue of control.

The first incident illustrates the connection of personal and relational growth with task empowerment. The background to this incident is as follows: until recently the most significant leadership vacuum in the church was in lay leadership for Christian education. This may have been

because we had a part-time staff person in Christian Education for the first year. Even though her job description was to develop lay leadership, the perception was that because she was there other people did not have to do it. When her contract ended in June there was no one willing to chair the education committee and take overall leadership. There was a highly effective Sunday school coordinator, and other tasks were being done piecemeal by various people taking some responsibility, but with much confusion about who was actually doing what and who was responsible for what. In September an ad hoc group of mothers decided to begin a fellowship group for fourth through sixth grade children, a large segment of our child population. Plans and responsibility were vague at first, with a spoken agreement that "We will just take turns and get things done." The discussion at the planning meeting was dominated by one woman who initially agreed to take leadership but then within a few weeks expressed feelings of overload and "not wanting to do it all." In the meantime one of the new adult small groups began, a Bible study led by me whose members are the same six women who decided to start the fellowship group.

After three months the children were enjoying the group but the adults were not. There was still confusion about who was supposed to do what, as well as unclarity about the goals of the group. In the meantime, one of the women in the Bible study group had agreed to be education chairperson. She

convened a meeting of the same women, for the purpose of
making decisions and plans about the future of the children's
fellowship group. I came to the meeting as a resource
person.

As we sat in a circle for this discussion, I was struck
with how the discussion dynamics had changed since the first
meeting three months earlier. The chairperson kept the group
moving through the topics and decisions, allowing
participation by all. A plan was developed for semi-monthly
meetings, with leadership provided by teams of two on a
rotating basis. Someone volunteered to coordinate the
program; someone else volunteered to provide refreshments.
My participation was limited to offering the curriculum
resources I had brought.

What had changed in three months? For one thing, the
group had experience about what did and did not work during
the previous period of time. They had data for problem-
solving. Something else had changed as well, though. They
had come to know each other personally in the context of the
Bible study, which was also developing into a support group.
I suspect that the growth in personal relationships
facilitated the group's ability to accomplish a task.

There is another side to this kind of collaborative work
in an empowered group. One person was unhappy--the woman who
had been so dominant at the first meeting and then had pulled
back from her involvement. The following day she said, "I

felt like it was all being taken away from me, and I had no control." It may be that the experience of mutual empowerment and shared power runs right into our personal issues of control.

I have sometimes felt that same frightening loss of control. One evening our treasurer and finance chairperson arranged to meet in the church office early in the evening to divide up record-keeping responsibilities and work on the computer files. I heard through one person's spouse that they were planning this work session and decided I would stick around so that I knew who was doing what. A little while into the evening they said, "Why don't you go home, Karen, and see your family. We can take care of this." I did go home, but I had the same kind of feeling, that "it was all being taken away from me and I had no control." I still struggle over questions about what I need to know and when I can simply let go, head home, and see my family.

The Process of Empowerment: Reflections

Kanter, Bennis and Nanus, and others writing on the topic of empowerment emphasize that the perceived importance of a task contributes to people's sense of empowerment. In other words, we feel empowered when we are doing something important to us and to others. In this way the new church setting is by its nature a potentially empowering context. The challenge, the newness, the opportunity to be part of developing something that will benefit others and that will

live on beyond oneself--people in our congregation have
mentioned these features again and again as motivating
factors in their own involvement.

There is another way that the new church context itself
can contribute to empowerment. The very lack of traditions
and trappings, together with the obvious experimental and
makeshift nature of what goes on, seem to give people
psychological permission to try things that for them are new
and possibly empowering. For example, two of the most
regular and enthusiastic lay worship leaders have made the
same observation: "In my old church I never would have been
brave enough to do this!" They are in a school cafeteria and
not a Gothic sanctuary, on the same level with their
listeners rather than perched in a high chancel far away from
the congregation. All this makes it easier to risk standing
up in front of their peers as worship leader.

The challenge which a new church context presents for
empowerment is the potentially overwhelming amount and nature
of available work to do, and the fact that most of it has to
be figured out and done for the first time. Kanter notes
that in order to empower people it is important to bring them
along step by step. Sometimes this means creating the
structure for people and giving them permission to move
slowly with it. In the day to day work of the church I also
have found it important to work with people, positioned in
the middle of the circle rather than out in front of the

wedge. As the work progresses, ministry leadership sometimes means unobtrusively picking up those tasks which others are unable or unwilling to do.

The challenge of potentially overwhelming work confronts the ministry leader first and foremost. The leader's sense of personal power or disempowerment will communicate itself to others. We cannot empower others unless we ourselves experience empowerment. Thus as Chapter 6 begins we return to the topic of the leader as person.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

The governing assumption of this project is that our capacity to minister and to lead is enhanced by a clear understanding of who we are and what we are doing. Understanding who we are as ministry leaders involves coming to terms with cultural and personal meanings about leadership, power, and authority and how these relate to God's work in and through us within our ministry contexts. Understanding what we do involves identifying priorities for practice and methods for living out these priorities.

Now in conclusion we return to these topics, taking the theological and theoretical framework for ministry leadership developed in the early chapters of this project and reflecting on how this framework is nuanced by my experience. Since the bridge to this chapter was the issue of the ministry leader's personal empowerment,we can begin with discussion of the fourth leadership issue, the person of the ministry leader. The first three--developing vision, shaping the culture, and empowering people--have been illustrated and discussed in the previous chapter.

One issue for the person in leadership is the issue of self-care. As previously stated, I believe that the importance of self-care in ministry leadership is deeper than conveyed by the usual advice to "take care of yourself so you don't burn out." This is not to discount the possibility of

burn-out, always a hazard in ministry and especially in a new church setting. The reason for self-care is more profound. Caring for ourselves and experiencing our own spiritual empowerment opens us to the work of the Holy Spirit.

In this sense self-nurture means doing whatever brings you into personal contact with the Spirit. For me several kinds of activities and experiences emerge as most significant. One way I experience the Spirit is through relationships with other people. Spending time regularly and frequently with my husband and daughters, intentionally making time with a good friend who is a minister in another denomination, participating in a clergy cluster and clergywomen's group are all significant to me spiritually. These contacts are especially important in new church ministry, because of the isolation and potential loneliness which this setting brings. Secondly, for me it is tremendously important to experience the beauty of God's creation through the arts. Through music I feel the Spirit, and through noticing and creating visual beauty in my surroundings. For me it is also important to participate regularly in worship, in a service for which I have no leadership responsibility.

These experiences, if I make sure they are regularly part of my life, bring me to awareness of God's power and reality in and around me. In other words, they contribute to my sense of existential power, the power which supplies

personal resources for living. In ministry leadership, we need to know that God is real and present even when the new church is not yet a reality. We need enough personal depth and power to be sustained during the times when the community around us does not grant us authority or follow our leadership attempts. We need to nurture ourselves so that the Holy Spirit can nurture us with the strength and resources needed for leadership. We need to allow ourselves to be reminded that the real authority for ministry comes from the Holy Spirit, flowing through us and the community.

This description of self-nurture and its importance for leadership relates to the more psychologically-oriented approach of Edwin Friedman. For Friedman the key to leadership is the person's capacity to define herself, apart from the pressures of others, while remaining connected in relationship. It is the capacity to be genuinely and non-anxiously oneself, including disagreeing or taking a different direction, and to do that without breaking off relationship. In order to be non-anxious and self-differentiated it is necessary to be well-nurtured and in touch with one's existential power.

Friedman's phrases "non-anxious presence" and "self-differentiation within relationship" have been almost mantras for me in the past few years. In a number of situations I have attempted to live out these principles. Probably the best example is the stewardship campaign. I kept in mind the

goal of staying non-anxiously present. I made efforts to claim my own convictions and personal commitments and also to hear the differences of opinion and the concerns being voiced. Another example would be the aftermath of choosing the church name, when people began to articulate the differences which had been present but unspoken. In that time I was guided by the ideals of non-anxious presence and genuine acknowledgement of differences. However, I did not voice any concerns or hesitations which I felt. I saw it as important to affirm and strengthen the group's decision and to use that decision as a point from which to develop common vision and purpose.

Groups typically form around commonalities--common interests, common goals, common characteristics, common beliefs. In the beginning of a group's life, a major agenda is to identify, strengthen, and further develop commonalities. This is the basis of developing a vision, of naming and affirming a common direction. The shaping of culture also requires reaching agreement, at the levels of assumptions and behavior, about who we are and how we do things. But the other side of commonality is difference. Especially in a diverse cultural setting and for a congregation with a goal of inclusiveness, there is tension between commonality and diversity, between how we are different and what we share in common.

Friedman's understanding of leadership by self-

differentiation includes a paradox: that claiming and
affirming differences can bring about stronger commonality.
He observes that when one person takes the responsibility for
defining and expressing herself or himself, these actions
have the effect of freeing others to do the same. The effect
can be that the real bonds, rather than the ones relying on
glossed-over disagreements, are discovered and strengthened.
His insight is supported by our congregation's experience of
choosing a church name and then dealing with the results of
that choice. As differences were stated and owned, common
ground began to develop.

My experience says that self-expression and the personal
development of gifts do tend to free up the same processes in
others. This has happened in the worship leadership,
especially music leadership, in our congregation. However,
the capacity to express differences within the context of
ongoing group relationships depends on the group's cohesion,
which develops with time and repeated experiences of
commonality. We cannot count on it at the beginning, but at
the same time must live in hope and faith that it will
develop. This was also illustrated in the our experience of
choosing a church name and the subsequent process of
developing a mission statement.

Another of Friedman's insights is that relates to the
way that "leaders" are sometimes in reality controlled by
their followers. He writes about "overfunctioning," the

tendency of leaders to do too much in response to the needs
of the group and, in that way, to be under the command of the
group's needs. He counsels leaders to "defect in place" when
the group is too dependent. In other words, just stop doing
so much and leave a space for others to fill the need. In
practice I did this by leaving town the week before our
stewardship visiting Sunday. And I suspect my absence did
leave space for others to take more responsibility. I
wonder, though, what would have happened had I done such a
thing a year earlier, even six months earlier. I suspect
that the willingness to fill the space left when a leader
"defects in place" depends on some history of common
experience and commitment.

In a new church, leadership features participation. The
ministry leader is more like the first violinist in a chamber
orchestra, who conducts while playing, than like the
conductor of a full symphony orchestra whose role is to
conduct but not to play. To change metaphors, we can say
that new church leadership frequently puts the ministry
leader in the center of Frances Hesselbein's organizational
circle (pictured on p. 21) The leader at the center
maintains connections with others around the circle, does
some of the work, and encourages the wheel to keep turning.

Other pictures describe other events and features in new
church ministry leadership. Sometimes I have felt like one
of the people sitting around the kitchen table, participating

with others in a shared conversation or task. An early
example was in the choice of the church name; a recent
example was the planning meeting for elementary fellowship.
Sometimes I as ministry leader am more like the goose in
front of the wedge. My job then is to show the way, travel
first, and in doing so break down the resistance. This was
an important leadership function in the stewardship campaign,
and to some extent in developing the mission statement and
responding to the setbacks and pain of members moving away.
While in that lead goose position I was aware of wanting the
support of those coming along behind and also looking for
them to take over at some point.

Leonardo Boff writes that the authority for ministry
leadership comes from the Holy Spirit, through the community,
to the official church leader. Authority given by the
community comes from and points back to the real author, the
real source, the Spirit of God. My re-drawing of Boff's
diagram, given in Chapter 4, reflects an understanding of the
Spirit as not only above but also below, around, and within
the community and each person. As I continue leading the
ministry of starting a new church, I become more and more
convinced that the real work of ministry leadership is to
support the Spirit's work in and around and through us all.
We are called to free up and support the work of the Spirit
in ourselves, through self-nurture and through claiming our
uniqueness by self-differentiation. Our presence and our

activity can also free up the work of the Spirit in others. This happens through the contagious power of spiritual growth and through the transforming leadership of naming and strengthening shared values and goals. It happens as we empower others by sharing responsibility and resources, by affirming and thanking and celebrating. And finally, our work is to free up and support the work of the Spirit in the whole community, the Body of Christ. This happens as vision is developed and lived out, as culture is formed, and as people are empowered. And, as the writer of Ephesians reminds us, all this is given to equip the people for ministry and for building up Christ's body, the church.

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